ROANOKE
VIRGINIA

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

vision 2001 2020

Planning for Roanoke's future economic development, neighborhoods, and quality of life.

vision 2001 2020

Vision 2001-2020 establishes a new direction for the City of Roanoke in terms of its housing, economic development, environment, historic and cultural resources, infrastructure, public services, quality of life, and city design. This plan gives us direction for the decisions we as a city must make over the next 10 to 20 years. The plan will allow us to build a better future, one that emphasizes a viable, sustainable community. The implementation of the strategic initiatives and actions of *Vision 2001-2020* will require partnerships between all sectors of the community. The public sector is important to the plan's implementation, but just as important are the support and initiatives of the neighborhood organizations, the non-profit sector, and the business and development communities. Certain initiatives will also require regional cooperation.

On behalf of the City of Roanoke, I would like to thank all the people who shared their thoughts, visions, hopes, and dreams for Roanoke during the development of this plan. Thanks to extensive public involvement, *Vision 2001-2020* defines a vision for Roanoke that is based on the goals and values expressed by our citizens. The more than 2,000 participants, including City staff who facilitated the process and shared their technical expertise as resource personnel for the citizens' committees, are to be commended for their dedication to the future of our city.

Ralph K. Smith, Mayor
City of Roanoke

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Foreword 4

Roanoke in 2020: A Vision of the Future 7

CHAPTER ONE

The Planning Process

1.1 Background and Purpose of Plan 14

1.2 An Interactive Planning Process: Involvement and Direction. 15

CHAPTER TWO

The City at the Cusp of a New Century

2.1 The Past as Prologue: Roanoke's History 20

2.2 Roanoke Today. 21

CHAPTER THREE

Plan Elements: The Building Blocks of the Plan

3.1 Housing and Neighborhoods 34

3.2 Environmental, Cultural, and Historic Resources. 43

3.3 Economic Development 52

3.4 Infrastructure: Transportation, Technology, Utilities. 63

3.5 Public Services: Police, Fire/EMS, Solid Waste Management, Code Enforcement 74

3.6 People: Education and Lifelong Learning, Health and Human Services, Libraries 79

CHAPTER FOUR

City Design: The Plan's Unifying Theme

4.1 Design Principles 88
4.2 Implementation: A Proactive Design Workshop 95
4.3 Design Illustrations and Schematics 95

CHAPTER FIVE

The Strategic Plan: Mapping Elements and Strategic Initiatives

5.1 Strategic Development Plan 114

CHAPTER SIX

Implementing the Plan: Priority Actions and Long-Term Policies

6.1 Regional Cooperation and Solutions 116
6.2 The Plan as an Ongoing Process 117
6.3 City Organization and Implementation Tools 118
6.4 Implementation: Strategies, Responsibilities, and Schedules 120

EXECUTIVE

SUMMARY

FOREWORD

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FOREWORD

Roanoke as a growing, dynamic, and sustainable city.
Vision 2001-2020 is a comprehensive plan that will guide investment and decision-making over the next 10 to 20 years. It is important to understand the overall vision and concepts that have guided the development of the plan's recommended policies and strategies.

1 **Roanoke's quality of life and economic development are integrally related.**
Retaining existing jobs and attracting new jobs are equally important factors in Roanoke's economic stability. Each relies not only on defining costs and benefits of doing business, but also on maintaining and selling the City and region as an attractive place to live and work.

Similarly, enhancing Roanoke's livability — its attractive quality of life, environment, neighborhoods, education, health, public services, and civic amenities — requires the continuing expansion of personal wages and public revenues to pay for these critical amenities.

2 **Roanoke is a city built using quality design principles.**
Beginning in 1907 with John Nolen's plan for *Remodeling Roanoke* and continuing to today, comprehensive plans have established the patterns of neighborhoods, business and commercial areas, parks, and open space. As recognized by the Nolen plan, considering the big picture for the City is important. A continued comprehensive emphasis on city design will improve Roanoke's attractiveness for new commercial and residential development and strengthen individual neighborhoods.

Future initiatives to promote quality city design should include the creation of new neighborhood design districts, landscape and transportation improvements to key corridors and intersections, and design guidelines for special economic development areas. Buildings and trees should shape the City's image rather than asphalt and signs.

3 **To implement the plan's policies, a series of strategic initiatives are identified.**
These initiatives include the following:

- **Targeted Industry Clusters.** As the regional economy shifts gears from a manufacturing base to a knowledge-based economy, marketing and development efforts should target industry clusters defined by existing regional assets and opportunities. An example of such a cluster is Roanoke's current biomedical initiative that builds on existing health care resources and higher education/institutional participation.

- **Getting Wired.** To accelerate the development of technological infrastructure, "getting wired" is a priority objective. Defining a regional relationship with Blacksburg and Virginia Tech will emphasize a complementary development environment for both entrepreneurial startups and established firms.

- **Redeveloping Underutilized Commercial and Industrial Sites.** To take advantage of its underutilized industrial and commercial land, the City should inventory industrial and commercial land and define opportunities for reuse based on market demand and innovative design potential, as well as on site size, location, accessibility, and infrastructure.

- **Village Centers.** As downtown continues to expand its traditional role as the region's business center, new or enhanced village centers can create attractive, smaller, decentralized multi-use development sites for commercial activity and higher-density housing.

- **Multi-Service Facilities.** To bring needed services closer to neighborhood users, the City can expand the outreach of public and not-for-profit programs for recreation, police, fire, neighborhood, library, and human services by creating a series of multi-service facilities at key locations.

- **New Housing Opportunities.** Identifying opportunities for new housing clusters — potential large site assemblies for development of new residential units — can provide opportunities for new housing more effectively than current approaches of single-lot infill development.

- **Investing in Critical Amenities.** The environmental, entertainment, and cultural elements of Roanoke's quality of life are critical amenities that must be financially supported if the region is to fulfill its economic development objectives. The larger community needs to define new methods to share the cost of maintaining and financing such attractions.

- **Selling Roanoke to Residents, Newcomers, and Visitors.** Roanoke is a well-kept secret within its own boundaries; residents are often not aware of existing amenities. An intense marketing effort must focus on both retaining local citizens, especially young people, and attracting outside companies, employees, and tourists to "Discover Roanoke" as a place to live, work, and play. Roanoke needs to develop a brand identity to be marketed aggressively at the local and global level.

- **Improving Streetscapes.** Roanoke's transportation framework has the most potential to affect the City's look and feel for residents and visitors. Creating great streets will improve both Roanoke's image and its function, providing not only a safe but also an attractive environment for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders, as well as for automobile drivers. Based on these values, new design principles should be developed and incorporated into new construction. Demonstration projects also should be pursued that enhance streets for community redevelopment.

- **Healthy Community.** Human services — education and libraries, health facilities, and social programs — are the basic infrastructure for a healthy community. A focus on high profile, positive programs will organize people-oriented services under a series of easily understandable umbrellas, communicating civic vision, attitude, and commitment. Such an approach can include combining early childhood learning, public schools, higher education, libraries, and continuing adult education into an integrated program for lifelong learning — or linking outreach programs for health and social services with information and referral networks, establishing the City of Roanoke as a healthy and sustainable community.

4 Roanoke is the heart of the region. The plan balances and links related elements and initiatives through a comprehensive regional and local development strategy:

- Regional linkages are identified that transcend municipal boundaries and relate Roanoke to the surrounding areas.
- Priority actions for new land use or public infrastructure initiatives are defined to reinforce multiple objectives.
- A variety of local project opportunities are identified to promote proactive, public-private development through the implementation of districts, gateway corridors, land use or zoning changes, and infrastructure improvements.

5 The continuing vitality and growth of Roanoke — like its development over the last 125 years — are dependent on individual and private actions, combined with public investment, to ensure quality of life amenities, infrastructure, and services.
In order to achieve the plan's challenging goals, a series of agreed upon implementation steps are critical:

- An ongoing evaluation process to regularly update the plan and its detailed components for housing, transportation, neighborhood and downtown plans, and other elements.
- Commitment by participants and private entities to be partners in implementing specific proposals.

- Administrative tools to implement the plan. Such tools may include updates to zoning and other regulatory ordinances, streamlined code compliance procedures, and links to City operating and capital budgeting procedures.

6 Roanoke's vision is to be a sustainable and livable community. Accomplishing this goal for the City and region implies establishing a permanent, continuing evaluation of economic and quality-of-life indicators — an ongoing report card of conditions and progress.

- Vision 2001-2020 provides the first step toward reaching this vision. The plan provides an inventory and evaluation of existing desirable strengths and assets, the quality of life amenities that citizen participants in the planning process hold most dear — keeping the soul.
- The plan establishes a broad model of what citizens want their community to be by recommending a comprehensive and balanced framework for preservation and development, an agenda for action, and a method of evaluation for achieving a sustainable community — imagining the future.

ROANOKE IN 2020: A VISION OF THE FUTURE

In the year 2020, Roanoke is a growing, dynamic, and sustainable city that is focused on the future with a strong, diverse economy and a balanced and growing population that values and enjoys a high quality of life in a safe and attractive environment. Working together, the City and region boast a steady growth in jobs and residents, higher school scores, improved government services, and a broader range of recreational and entertainment activities. Through regional cooperation, the mountain views and ridgetops are protected and are easily accessed by a network of greenways that link downtown, neighborhoods, and regional parks and parkways.

Roanoke's sustainability is measured not only by the health of its economy but also by its quality of life. Economic prosperity can be continued and enhanced by supporting our cultural and entertainment amenities, education, and other services. Protecting our natural environment, supporting a wide range of cultural and entertainment amenities, maintaining a first-class educational system, and providing ongoing educational opportunities will be the building blocks for attracting new residents and businesses.

The plan establishes a series of specific visions for the year 2020 to accomplish this overall goal:

Housing and Neighborhoods

Roanoke's neighborhoods are vibrant places for people of all ages, lifestyles, and income to live, work, and play. To achieve this vision:

- Roanoke will actively seek to attract a balanced, sustainable population representing all ages, income levels, backgrounds, and lifestyles.
- Roanoke's neighborhoods will be more than just places to live; they will be the nucleus for civic life. Their local "village centers" serve as vibrant and accessible places for business, community services, and activities, including higher-density housing clusters.
- Roanoke will offer a diversity of housing choices, including not only a range of housing prices but also housing types such as single-family houses, condominiums, multi-family high-rise and low-rise rental units, town homes, and patio homes. Suitable housing should be available in the neighborhood of one's choice for people at all stages of their lives, ranging from new homebuyers to empty nesters.

Environmental and Cultural Resources

Roanoke successfully markets itself and the region to residents and visitors as both an outdoors and an indoors destination — combining outstanding cultural and eco-tourism in one community. To achieve this vision:

- The Roanoke Valley Greenway system will be an interconnected network that not only serves City residents but also links downtown and village centers to City parks and recreation sites, the Roanoke River, and Mill Mountain. The system will be completed through enhanced regional cooperation with a "fast-track" implementation schedule. It will also become a regional resource, combining old rights-of-way, river and creek corridors, and various public lands and easements into a larger system of hiking trails, park features, fishing areas, rafting zones, and other natural features.

- Roanoke's clean air and water and greatly expanded greenways and tree cover will be assets that are recognized and supported by the whole community.

- Entertainment and cultural attractions will draw tourists and visitors who contribute to the City's liveliness. The City will be the regional center for multi-cultural events and attractions celebrating the diversity of the City and the region. The downtown will be a vibrant and dynamic destination that includes an exciting mix of restaurants, clubs, and night-spots to complement the art, museum, and theatre venues. This is in large part thanks to funding from additional sources and a regional asset district that will provide funds from consumer and private sources.

Economic Development

Roanoke is the strong center of a strong region, boasting a creative, diverse, sustainable economy. To achieve this vision:

- "New economy" opportunities will be regionally marketed and developed. The Roanoke Valley Economic Development Partnership will successfully market the region's assets to businesses in targeted industry groups such as biotechnology, optics, information technology/software, and transportation-related manufacturing and services.

- Roanoke's vibrant downtown will serve as the economic engine and cultural center for the region, enhanced by new activity centers through the designation of a technology zone and an expanded library and Higher Education Center.

- The Riverside Centre for Research and Technology, with the Carilion Biomedical Institute as its anchor, will serve as a successful prototype for similar biotechnology industry clusters in the future.

- Roanoke's brand identity will be known both locally and globally. Roanoke will be rated as one of the top tourist destinations for outdoors and family vacations. The Roanoke name will be associated with its healthy outdoors and adventure areas, combined with high-quality entertainment. The marketing strategy will be credited with increasing tourism and attracting several nationally known businesses to locate in the City. The influx of young professionals and families will boost the City's marketability to businesses that are seeking a quality lifestyle and a pool of talented, highly trained professionals.
- Roanoke's labor force will be well educated and trained for cutting-edge career opportunities that link industry with colleges and high schools.
- Underutilized industrial sites throughout the City will be targeted for intensive economic development and reuse.

Transportation and Infrastructure

In 2020, Roanoke's transportation system is an integrated multi-modal, user-friendly network of well-designed streets that support auto, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic. To achieve this vision:

- Roanoke's transportation system will include an attractive and efficient network of roadways. Landscaped urban boulevards connecting neighborhoods and urban areas will be bordered by sidewalks, comfortable for bikers, and linked to greenways. Expressways will be carefully designed to carry traffic through, into, and out of the City with carefully minimized impact on surrounding neighborhoods. Local transit will connect higher-density centers of development — downtown and major employment centers along main roadway corridors — supported by a demand-driven system of buses and shuttles that serves areas of greatest access needs.
- Air traffic will link the region to major national destinations, and passenger rail service will have returned to the City, making possible short trips to Charlottesville, Richmond, Washington, and other points North and South.
- A framework of support infrastructure will set the stage for sustainable economic growth and quality development — not only the physical network of telecommunications, public utilities, and private energy networks, but also an associated program of available earmarked space, a trained workforce, and supportive government policies.

Public Safety and Services

The City delivers high-quality, effective services to maintain and enhance the City's safety, appearance, and environment. To achieve this vision:

- Roanoke will be known as a safe city where public services are professional, standardized, responsive, and community oriented. Public safety services will be provided equitably, efficiently, and effectively to citizens, regardless of jurisdiction.

- The City will have a multi-departmental approach to identifying and resolving a variety of community issues and strengthening the cooperative relationship among City departments, business and neighborhood organizations, and citizens. Multi-service facilities in key areas of the City will offer needed public services and programs at convenient and accessible locations.

- Solid waste management and recycling will be a model program with participation from all citizens in the City and in other jurisdictions.

People and Human Development

In 2020, all citizens have access to a first-rate educational system linked to skills-based training programs and to state-of-the-art health care to enhance and support a healthy and productive life. To achieve this vision:

- The City will promote lifelong learning for all citizens by encouraging the development of first-class academic and vocational institutions that recognize the changing global economy and diverse world in which we live.

- Roanoke's schools will be known for their enhanced education programs that ensure all children receive a quality education for entry into the workplace or participation in higher education.

- The library will be a state-of-the art information and research center. The new downtown library will receive national recognition as a model for the new role of libraries in the community as collections of information, knowledge centers, and community learning locations. The video conferencing center will enable small businesses and groups to actively participate in national and international programs; the coffee shop will be a favorite meeting place that regularly hosts programs ranging from authors' nights to Scrabble tournaments.

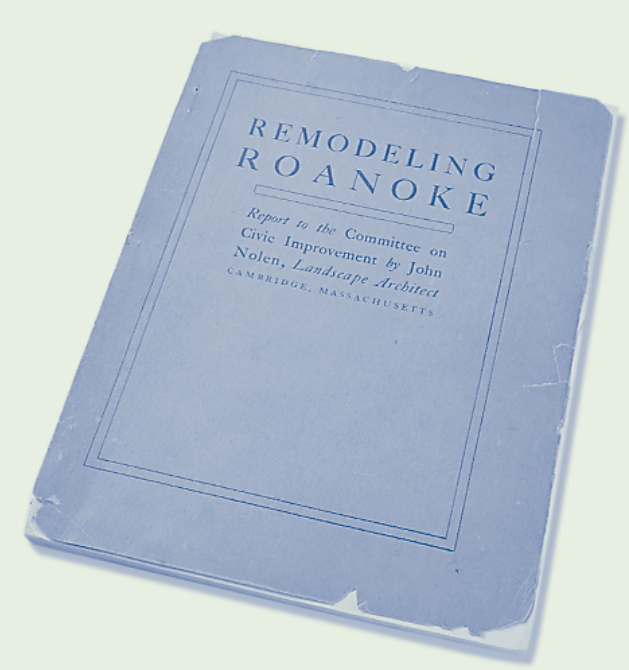
- The City's state-of-the-art health care and research facilities will continue to provide the highest quality health care for residents in the region. A community-based system will bring human and health services into neighborhoods to provide affordable, accessible health and human services that respond to needs and improve the quality of life for all citizens.

- New multi-service facilities in neighborhoods will include outreach space for public sector and non-profit human services programs and provide services to citizens where they are needed. These facilities will function as 12-month community centers for education, lifelong learning, information and referral, and recreation for people of all ages.

City Design

Finally, a unifying theme to implement Roanoke's vision of a sustainable and livable city is that of city design — increasing the beauty of Roanoke's gateways and streetscapes, neighborhood and housing developments, village commercial centers, and new economic development and institutional growth. To achieve this vision:

- Design improvements to major entry corridors into the City will enhance Roanoke's image and the visual appearance of the City.
- Design principles and guidelines will serve as marketing tools and provide desired models for new development by investors and landowners that encourage compatibility with existing neighborhoods. Village centers and areas for housing clusters will provide opportunities for new economic development initiatives.
- Similarly, new public facilities and buildings will be designed for quality appearance and multiple functions. Streets will have minimal pavement width, place greater emphasis on tree canopy and sidewalks, and include bicycle and pedestrian systems. Impacts of new development will be carefully mitigated through creative planning and design.



REMODELING ROANOKE

Roanoke's first comprehensive plan, *Remodeling Roanoke*, was completed in 1907 by famous landscape architect and planner John Nolen. Roanoke's plan was one of the first comprehensive plans in the nation. In 1997, Roanoke received a National Historic Landmark Planning Award from the American Institute of Certified Planners for this historic plan. Key recommendations of the plan included the grouping of municipal facilities, a river greenway, and street beautification standards.

CHAPTER

ONE

THE PLANNING PROCESS

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1.1 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF PLAN

The City's comprehensive plan is an official public document adopted by City Council. The plan is to be used as a long-term guide for land use decisions related to growth and development and to assist the City in determining when and where new public facilities and improvements are needed. Recommendations of the comprehensive plan are typically general and long-range to outline a vision of the City over a 20-year period.

Legal Basis for the Plan

Vision 2001-2020 was developed in accordance with Title 15.2 of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended. The local planning commission is authorized to prepare and recommend a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the territory within its jurisdiction. Every governing body is required to adopt a comprehensive plan for the territory under its jurisdiction. The plan is to be general in nature and designate the general location, character, and extent of public facilities.

Updating the Plan

Annual Report

Vision 2001-2020 recommends conducting an annual review of the comprehensive plan in coordination with the City's operating budget, capital improvements program, departmental strategic plans, and other financial and regulatory tools. The annual report is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

Five-Year Updates

The Code of Virginia requires that the comprehensive plan be reviewed at least every five years. Detailed procedures for developing five-year updates are recommended for this plan in Chapter 6.

Amendments

As with any document, amendments may be needed over time depending on new initiatives, more detailed planning, or changes in government policy. Examples of possible future amendments include neighborhood plans, transportation improvement plans, housing plans, parks plans, or other master plans.

Conflicts may arise between previously adopted and newly proposed policies. The policies and actions within Vision 2001-2020 will supersede any conflicting policies, actions, guidelines, and/or principles contained in any of the area or neighborhood plans.

Plan Implementation

The plan can be implemented through a variety of regulatory and financial tools. Generally, comprehensive plans are implemented primarily through the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, Operating Budget and Capital Improvements Program, Neighborhood Plans, and Master Plans for specific areas.

Understanding and Using the Plan

Chapters 1 and 2 provide background material for understanding the primary purpose of the plan and the planning process used to develop Vision 2001-2020.

Chapter 3 contains the plan's elements and summarizes the main ideas and recommendations of the plan. Each element consists of four parts that build on one another:

- **Background.** Fact-based information that provides the basis for policy approaches.
- **Policy approach.** Community values used to develop policies.
- **Policies.** Guidelines to be used when evaluating development.
- **Actions.** Measurable steps to implement the plan.

Chapter 4 includes the city design principles to be used as guidelines for development. This chapter also provides design illustrations for selected model development opportunities.

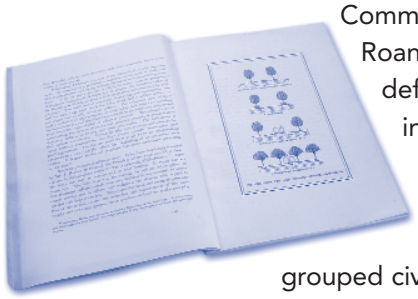
Chapter 5 includes a strategic development plan that consolidates the main recommendations made in the elements of the plan.

Chapter 6 contains a matrix that consolidates the actions identified in the plan's elements into a single document. A general timeframe and participants responsible for implementing the plan are identified with each action.

1.2 AN INTERACTIVE PLANNING PROCESS: INVOLVEMENT AND DIRECTION

Past Plans

The renowned John Nolen plans of 1907, *Remodeling Roanoke*, and 1928, *The Comprehensive City Plan*, established the framework for the City's growth. Initially sponsored by the Women's Civic Betterment Club, a local volunteer group, and later a City Planning Commission, these far-reaching visions were created while Roanoke was still an emerging railroad town. The Nolen plans defined boulevard corridors, open space systems, and an interrelated network of residential neighborhoods, community facilities, and centrally-located businesses and services. Nolen's legacy can be seen in Roanoke through its attractive riverside drive, grid street pattern, trees, grouped civic buildings, neighborhood parks, and Mill Mountain.



The process and responsibility for city planning have grown and changed since Nolen. A comprehensive plan completed in 1964 responded to urban issues and resulted in policies for urban renewal in downtown and in the City's aging neighborhoods. The 1985 *Roanoke Vision* comprehensive plan used a visioning process that earned Roanoke national recognition for incorporating community participation into the way it does business. The plan engaged neighborhood energy and enthusiasm through a series of public forums, TV programs, citizen surveys, and outreach meetings. Results have included preservation of historic areas, revitalization of neighborhoods and commercial districts, beautification projects, new commercial/employment projects around the airport and Valley View Mall, and the development of the Roanoke Centre for Industry and Technology. In addition, the plan initiated a series of community-based neighborhood plans.

Vision 2001-2020: A Participatory Process

Vision 2001-2020 is a product of an intensive citizen participation process involving more than 2,000 citizens through public forums, surveys, interviews, and public meetings. The community participation process was launched in the fall of 2000 with a citywide forum attended by more than 200 residents who were asked to share their ideas for the future. In addition, a citizen-opinion survey was mailed to all City households in the premier issue of *Roanoke Citizen*. The forum and the survey provided the direction for the 44-member Vision 2001-2020 Advisory Committee appointed by City Council in October 2000.

A series of public meetings and neighborhood workshops were held between the fall of 2000 and the spring of 2001, inviting the community to discuss the plan concepts as they were being developed by the Committee and City staff. The overall strategy of Vision 2001-2020 and its many specific approaches are based on the goals and values expressed by the community.

City Council Direction

In 1997, City Council adopted a strategic vision to guide City policy:

City Council Vision.

Roanoke, "The Star City," appreciating its past and planning for a shining future, will be a community of excellence, providing an outstanding quality of life through educational, economic, and cultural opportunities for all people who live, work, and visit here.

Effective Government.

Roanoke City government will be a leading force in shaping and achieving the future of our community. We will be participatory, responsive, and efficient, valuing diverse community involvement, public/private partnerships, and regional cooperation. Citizens will be involved in the establishment of community priorities. Our facilitative government will bring together all available resources to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Economy.

Roanoke, with its vibrant downtown, will be a dynamic, diversified regional center of commerce and tourism, competing effectively in the global economy. To enhance economic opportunities, we will promote regional cooperation, nurture growth in existing business, and recruit attractive new business and industry. Roanoke will be a destination for people seeking a unique combination of scenic, cultural, and recreational attractions.

Education.
Roanoke will be a "learning" community providing the necessary educational resources and opportunities for all persons to develop to their maximum potential. Through community involvement and the latest technology, we will provide quality public education. We will strengthen our cooperation with area colleges and universities and expand continuing education to promote an environment of lifelong learning.

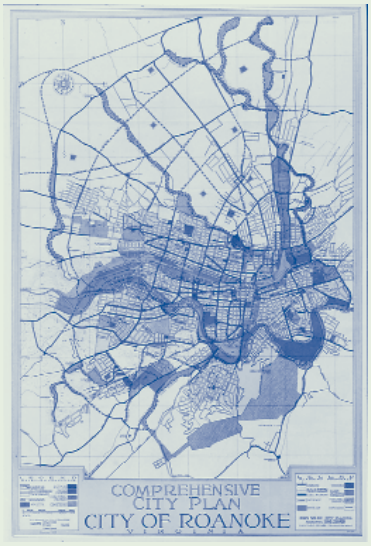
Quality of Life.
Roanoke will be a community where every person and every family is important and respected. We will be a community of stable, safe, healthy, caring, and friendly neighborhoods. We will protect our natural environment and promote cultural, social, economic, and recreational opportunities that encourage present and future generations to choose Roanoke as their home.

In adopting and reaffirming this strategic vision, City Council confirms its commitment to protecting, enhancing, and strengthening these qualities to ensure that Roanoke continues to maintain its place as the economic, cultural, financial, and medical center for the region and throughout Southwest Virginia.

Vision 2001-2020 is an opportunity to implement City Council's vision for Roanoke's future. The City's comprehensive plan is one of many tools that are vital to the successful implementation of Council's vision. The plan establishes the goals and direction that will guide annual decision-making processes such as the capital improvements program, consolidated plan update, and transportation improvement plan, as well as ongoing detailed plans and strategies such as neighborhood plans, a housing plan, and a downtown plan.

ROANOKE'S FIRST PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION, 1929

Roanoke's *1928 Comprehensive City Plan* authored by John Nolen is also recognized as a national Historic Planning Landmark document. The City's Planning Commission was one of the first in the nation. The plan recommended a parkway along the Roanoke River, neighborhood schools and parks, and street improvements and beautification. The plan incorporated the cutting edge principles of city planning for the time and set the stage for one of the nation's first zoning ordinances in 1932.



Members of the first Commission:
Edward L. Stone, Chairman; Mrs. Lucian H. Cocke; B. N. Eubank; D. D. Hull, Jr.; and C. Shelburne Spindle.

CHAPTER

TWO

THE CITY AT THE CUSP OF A NEW CENTURY

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2.1 THE PAST AS PROLOGUE: ROANOKE'S HISTORY

Roanoke's history as a crossroads for commerce began in the 1740s. Mark Evans and Tasker Tosh came from Pennsylvania and took up land near the salt licks where Indian and animal trails crossed in the center of the valley. For generations, those salt marshes, or licks as they were called, had been a gathering place for buffalo, elk and deer, and the Native Americans who hunted them. By 1798, the thriving community was known as Big Lick and had a federally-established post office. In 1834, the Town of Gainesborough was chartered adjacent to the village of Big Lick. The Virginia and Tennessee railroad came to the valley in 1852 and established its route just south of the community. With the coming of the railroad, the settlement patterns of Big Lick shifted further south and west to the area now in the vicinity of Second Street, S.W. and the railroad tracks. The older settlement, including Gainesborough, became known as Old Lick. In 1874, the new village was chartered as the Town of Big Lick.

Seven years later, with the coming of the Shenandoah Valley Railroad, Big Lick was renamed Roanoke for the river and the county. Roanoke was derived from the Indian word "Rawrenock," a name for the shell beads worn by the Indians and used for trade.

The arrival of the railroad marked the beginning of the building boom. The legacy of development patterns begun in these early boom years is still evident. The location of the Norfolk and Western headquarters in Roanoke sparked a building boom between 1874 and 1889.

Roanoke was chartered as a city in 1882. Industrial development grew along the rail lines and the Roanoke River. Speculative land companies built housing to meet the needs of the railway workers. By the early 1900s, Roanoke had established itself as a growing industrial city, and the desire for homeownership spurred more substantial residential development.

In 1907, Roanoke's first comprehensive plan, entitled *Remodeling Roanoke*, was commissioned by a group of citizens called the Women's Civic Betterment Club. This plan, written by John Nolen, was one of the first such efforts in the nation. It established the foundation for the City by coordinating the location of the downtown buildings along Jefferson Street and at the site of the City Market, establishing an orderly street system, and proposing a network of parks.

Twenty years later, Roanoke citizens and City government recognized the need to update the plan. Key results of the 1928 plan can be seen throughout Roanoke today. The road and park systems were developed and school locations were identified. The sites for Victory Stadium, the City's first airport, and the present municipal buildings were chosen. The plan included the City's first zoning ordinance, which controlled how land in the City could be used.

By 1964, the City had grown to include 26 square miles with a population of 97,110. When the City developed a new plan in 1964, the prevailing wisdom was that the greater metropolitan area, which included the City of Roanoke, Roanoke County, Salem City, and Vinton, would continue to grow rapidly. Residential and retail development would follow the national trend of moving to outlying suburban areas. While business would continue to locate in the central downtown area, the surrounding City, with its easy access to rail sidings and major thoroughfares, would continue to be an attractive and cost-effective location for large industry.

The plan responded to this projection by recommending reuse of old neighborhood areas as centers for business, industry, offices, and institutions. In 1966, the City's zoning code was changed to reflect this plan. While the plan reflected the accepted development theory, little protection was built into the zoning or planning to protect the residential and other low-density areas during the projected transition phase to higher density and more intense business and industrial uses.

From the 1980s to the present, as described in the introduction, Roanoke turned to structured citizen input to help guide its planning and decision making. Not coincidentally, the City began to rediscover the value of its older neighborhoods. Approaches were developed to retain the City's residential and business character. Revised zoning reflected preservation values and mitigation of conflict from new development. New action plans and strategies for downtown, neighborhoods, parks, and economic development were created. Roanoke continued to evolve from a manufacturing to a service economy while maintaining its stability as a mature city, the vibrant center of a vital region.

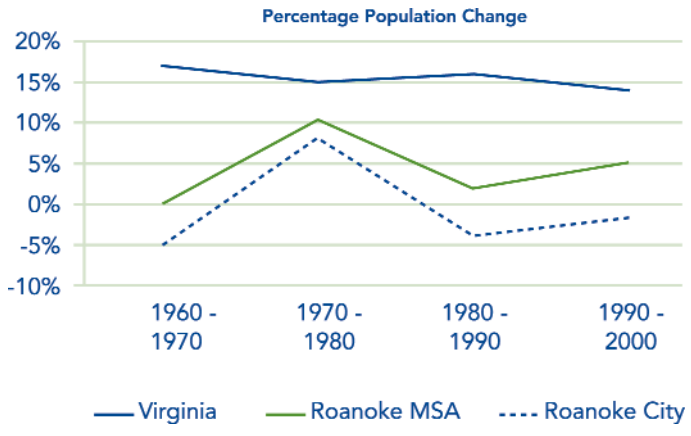
2.2 ROANOKE TODAY

Who We Are: Demographics and Institutions

Demographic Base

Roanoke has a relatively stable population representing approximately 40% of the metropolitan area. No large population gains or losses have occurred in the past 20 years. The City has experienced a slight but steady population decrease from the 1980 Census of 100,200 and the 1990 Census of 96,397 to the 2000 Census of 94,911. Between 1990 and 2000, the metropolitan area population increased by five percent to 235,932. Roanoke's successful efforts to diversify its economy, develop a strong downtown, and strengthen its neighborhoods have been credited for the City's success in retaining a relatively stable population base in the face of the trend for central cities to experience more significant population loss. For purposes of Vision 2001-2020, the City should project the continued trend of a slight but steady population decrease over the next 10 years.

Reporting on population statistics and trends has traditionally relied on information provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. The population totals and ethnic characteristics from the 2000 Census indicate very slight changes from the projections and trends used by the City's *Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan* (which incorporated data from Claritas, Inc., a national firm specializing in projections and market trends) and the University of Virginia Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service. For planning purposes, as detailed U.S. Census data is not yet available, the statistics currently available from these latter sources will be used in describing the City's demographics.



Age Structure

There has been very little change in the age structure since 1985, except for the inevitable aging of different generations, moving their relative proportion along the population curve. The largest segment of the population (59.3%) falls into the working age brackets of 20-64. Roanoke's elderly residents, age 65 and over, and youth, age 18 and under, together comprise an estimated 40.7% of the population. These non-working age groups require a variety of health, education, recreation, and other human services.

The over 64 population in Roanoke generally has increased. In 1970 it was 13.5% of the City total; in 1980 it was 15.7%; in 1990 it was 17%; however, in 2000 the percentage of residents 65 and older decreased to 16%.

Trends

The increase in population is occurring in the age groups of 40-54 and ages 85+. These are generally the older families, empty nesters, and retired citizens groups. Senior citizen groups are increasing in part due to longer life expectancies. The age group of 10-14 shows the highest increase among the under 18 age groups.

		AGE 17 & UNDER		AGE 18-44		AGE 45-64		AGE 65-84		AGE 85 & OVER	
Jurisdiction	**Med. Age**	**#**	**%**	**#**	**%**	**#**	**%**	**#**	**%**	**#**	**%**
Botetourt County	36.8	5,806	23.20%	10,281	41.10%	5,858	23.40%	2,836	11.40%	211	0.90%
Roanoke City	35.2	21,174	22.00%	40,890	42.40%	17,887	18.60%	14,459	15.00%	1,987	2.10%
Roanoke County	37.3	17,827	22.50%	32,776	41.30%	18,023	22.70%	9,498	12.00%	1,208	1.50%
Salem City	37.1	4,667	19.60%	9,973	42.00%	5,172	21.80%	3,529	14.90%	415	1.70%
MSA TOTAL	**36.4**	**49,474**	**22.00%**	**93,920**	**41.90%**	**46,940**	**20.90%**	**30,322**	**13.50%**	**3,821**	**1.70%**

Bureau of the Census: 1990

The decreases in population are occurring in the age groups of 18-29 and 60-69 year olds. The younger set is generally the younger adults right out of college or young couples who move due to job and housing opportunities.

Each of these trends is largely due to past population bulges or dips for specific age groups, modified to some degree by in- and out-migration trends. For instance, the dip in the age group of 60-69 year olds mirrors earlier low proportions of 50-59 year olds ten years ago. Consequently, a bulge in the senior population can be expected in twenty years time, as the current bulge in 40-49 year olds makes its way through the system. This projection has policy and economic implications.

Similarly, the current dip in 10-19 year olds can cause concern if it extends into a future decline in younger-age workers and parents. This could be mitigated by additional in-migration, spurred by economic opportunities or other factors.

Population Characteristics

The majority racial population is that of whites at 71.3%. African-Americans are the second largest group, projected to have increased from 24.1% in 1990 to 27.4% in 2000. Hispanic-Americans and Asian-Americans, although smaller groups in terms of absolute numbers, are rapidly expanding in terms of percentage of growth, both projected to have increased from 0.7% in 1990 to 2% by the year 2000.

An analysis of the impediments to fair housing in the Roanoke Metropolitan Area completed in April 2001 reports a high degree of racial isolation in the City and metropolitan area. An estimated 89.7% of the population of the metro area lies in census tracts that are either overwhelmingly white (more than 80%) or overwhelmingly black. Although the number of African-Americans living in Roanoke County, City of Salem, and the Town of Vinton increased, the majority of the area's African-Americans (85.4%) live in the City of Roanoke.

Household Size and Characteristics

Decreasing household size is another national trend shared by Roanoke. In Roanoke, household size has decreased from 2.85 persons per household in 1970 to 2.6 in 1980 and to 2.3 in 1990, and is projected to decrease to 2.22 in 2002. The total number of households is also decreasing.

Institutional Capacity

Roanoke's strong citizen spirit is reflected in its support of a wide range of civic, cultural, environmental, and religious organizations.

Neighborhood Organizations

The Roanoke Neighborhood Partnership, a public/private partnership including neighborhoods, businesses, civic and human service agencies, and the City government, has been actively involved in supporting community activities since 1980. It has grown from the initial four neighborhoods to an active membership of more than 20 neighborhood and business organizations. The Partnership has grown from its initial role of supporting and developing neighborhood organizations to providing technical assistance on a range of projects such as the creation of neighborhood development corporations, grant writing, and self-sufficiency.

Participating neighborhood organizations range from small groups focused on neighborhood clean-up projects and crime prevention programs to larger multi-focused organizations actively involved in development projects and citizen advocacy.

Advocacy and Action Groups

Roanoke and its surrounding region also boast a wide range of advocacy and action groups

ranging from topical groups such as environmental and historic organizations to special focus groups such as the NAACP, Total Action Against Poverty, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and other nonprofit organizations.

The National Conference for Community and Justice provides services regarding conflict resolution, advocacy, promoting cultural and religious understanding, and multicultural education.

Civic and Cultural Organizations

In keeping with the City's position as a regional hub, Roanoke's civic and cultural organizations such as the Jaycees, Kiwanis, Arts Council, Square Society, Junior League, and Lions Clubs attract members from the greater Roanoke region. This infusion of energy and support for the community strengthens the City's position as the financial, retail, and cultural center of the Valley.

As the largest city in western Virginia, Roanoke is rich in multi-cultural organizations including museums, theaters, symphony, ballet, opera, and others that provide a wide range of cultural opportunities for City residents and the surrounding region.

Outdoor interests are strongly supported by a range of clubs and organizations that sponsor outdoor activities and champion the importance of maintaining the natural environment.

What We Do: City/Regional Economic Profile

A healthy and vital economy is vital to Roanoke's success. Economic activity is the source of jobs and income for City residents as well as nonresidents. Economic activity provides tax revenues to local governments, and many businesses provide goods and services that enhance the quality of life in City neighborhoods.

The City of Roanoke is not in itself a local economy. Activity within the boundaries of the City is part of the economy of the entire Roanoke Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). While the City, the Counties of Roanoke and Botetourt, and the City of Salem have separate political identities, in economic terms they function as a single unit with the City as their economic center. The City of Roanoke is home to 53.1% of the companies in the MSA and employs 54.7% of the area's employees.

Research has shown that along with the existing labor force of 129,097, there are over 10,000 total new entrants into the labor force each year alone from college/university and secondary educational institutions located in and around the region. A survey of major local firms indicated a large number of new applicants each month who provide those firms with a more-than-adequate pool from which to fulfill staffing needs.

The pattern of much of Roanoke's economy was established prior to 1920. Roanoke's economic base, however, has been more varied since the economic recession of the late 1950s, at which point the City began its long transition from a manufacturing to a service/information-based economy. Today, Roanoke's economy is well diversified, consisting

of service industries, wholesale and retail trade, manufacturing, governmental activity, transportation, and other non-farm activities.

By 1998, the service industry was the largest industry in the City, employing almost 25,000 or 33.1% of the labor base. Health care related activity accounted for one-third of the service industry, due, in part, to Roanoke's service as the regional medical center of southwestern Virginia. Reflecting a nationwide trend toward an increase in service industries, the City has experienced employment gains mainly in business, legal, educational, engineering, and management services.

Trade (retail sales) is the second largest industry, covering a 16-county trade area, which has a combined population in excess of 600,000. This population is located within a one-hour drive of downtown Roanoke and has effective buying income of over $9.4 billion. Roanoke's per capita taxable sales in 1998 were $11,446, the highest in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Roanoke has had the highest per capita taxable sales in the Commonwealth for seven years.

Manufacturing is the third largest industry in the City, employing 9,926 workers or 13.2% of the employment base. A broad range of manufacturing companies is represented, producing buses, textiles and apparel, fiber optics, business forms, and ceramic chip capacitors.

Government is the fourth largest employer in the City with 6,964 employees, of which 59% are local government, 25% are federal, and 16% are state employees.

Transportation is the fifth largest industry in the City, representing over 5,400 jobs, while finance, insurance, and real estate ranks sixth with 4,630 employed. Banking institutions dot the City, constituting some of the area's largest employers. Insurance and real estate firms are well represented.

FACTS ABOUT ROANOKE

- Total employment in the City increased by 7.9% from 119,595 in 1990 to 129,097 in 2000.
- In 1990, the unemployment rate for the City was 3.6%, growing to a high of 5.6% in 1992. It dropped to an historic low of 1.6% in 2000. Along with 2,012 unemployed persons counted in April 2000, it is estimated that over 8,960 persons are employed yet remain below the poverty level, indicating the existence of a potential pool of "underemployed" who would be willing to move to another job to improve their wages.
- The Roanoke MSA dominates the local labor draw area as well, with a net in-commuting total each day of almost 15,000 workers. In 1980, 10,500 people commuted into the City; in 1990, that number had doubled to 20,234.

MAJOR EMPLOYERS:
Second Quarter, 1999 Roanoke Valley Region

Employer	# of Employees
Carilion Health System	6,040
Virginia Veterans Care Center Veterans Affairs Medical Center	3,223
Roanoke County Public Schools	2,808
Norfolk Southern	2,800
First Union	2,610
Roanoke City Public Schools	2,482
City of Roanoke	2,270
United States Postal Service	2,228
Commonwealth of Virginia (State Government)	1,772
Kroger	1,752

Employer	# of Employees
Advance Stores Co Inc	1,608
Allstate	1,416
ITT	1,405
Lewis Gale Hospital	1,369
General Electric	1,335
Manpower	1,256
County of Roanoke	1,190
Wal-Mart Stores	1,126
Yokohama Tire Corp	1,121
City of Salem	1,056

Source: City of Roanoke, Department of Economic Development

How We Live: Land Uses, Districts and Neighborhoods

Land Uses

The City of Roanoke is a mature city in which most of the land has been developed for particular uses. Recent developments have been infill, renovation, or expansion of existing planned uses. Although a variety of projects has been completed in the last fifteen years, the general locations of uses have not changed in any substantial way.

The Existing Land Use map on page 29 depicts the City's pattern of land use:

> **Commercial uses**, office, retail, and other job-related functions, are found in the downtown core, in neighborhood commercial nodes throughout the City, or along major access ways. Downtown, which has recently prospered from a continuing influx of new office workers who have attracted new shops and restaurants, is anchored by activity centers such as the Farmers' Market. Neighborhood centers provide local retail, groceries, shops, and restaurants. Auto-related retail is located along major commercially-zoned highways. Other employment centers are located in industrial areas around the airport or in planned industrial centers such as the Roanoke Centre for Industry and Technology.

Residential uses in Roanoke's neighborhoods promote a distinctive character. Higher-density residential developments — smaller lot houses or multiple-unit buildings — contribute to the pedestrian quality of the older neighborhoods surrounding downtown. Newer neighborhoods built after the 1940s are more suburban in character and density. Garden apartment complexes on specific outlying sites tend to be isolated auto-oriented developments.

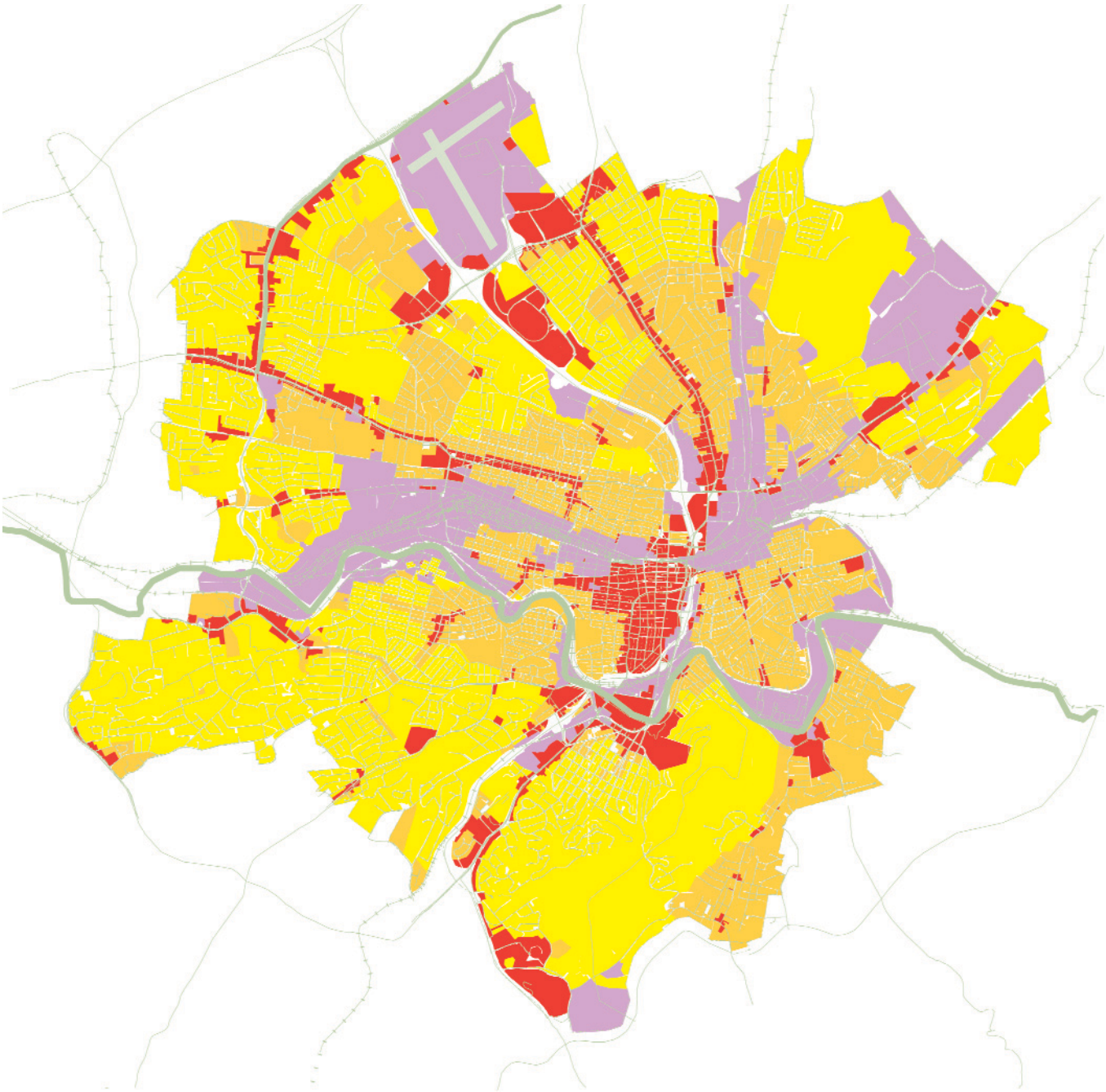
Institutional uses are located with respect to function and needed accessibility. Regional or citywide uses — municipal government buildings, the Roanoke Higher Education Center, and major hospitals — are located in or near the central downtown area or along major highways. Local institutions — schools, social services, and other similar facilities — are located near neighborhood centers. These uses can be reinforced with complementary facilities and nearby services.

Infrastructure uses are found along major highways and rail corridors. These include utility plants, landfill facilities, auto-related uses, the Roanoke Regional Airport, rail yards, and other transportation support facilities. They are often less attractive or less than the highest and best uses for particular sites, making them potential candidates for reuse.

Open space uses are found among the City's natural resources or undeveloped land. They include publicly-owned open space such as Mill Mountain. They also include recreation and park space near the Roanoke River and Victory Stadium or golf course facilities, as well as remaining agricultural land within the City. These uses are particular to the City's natural features and are often not well connected to each other or to neighborhood users.

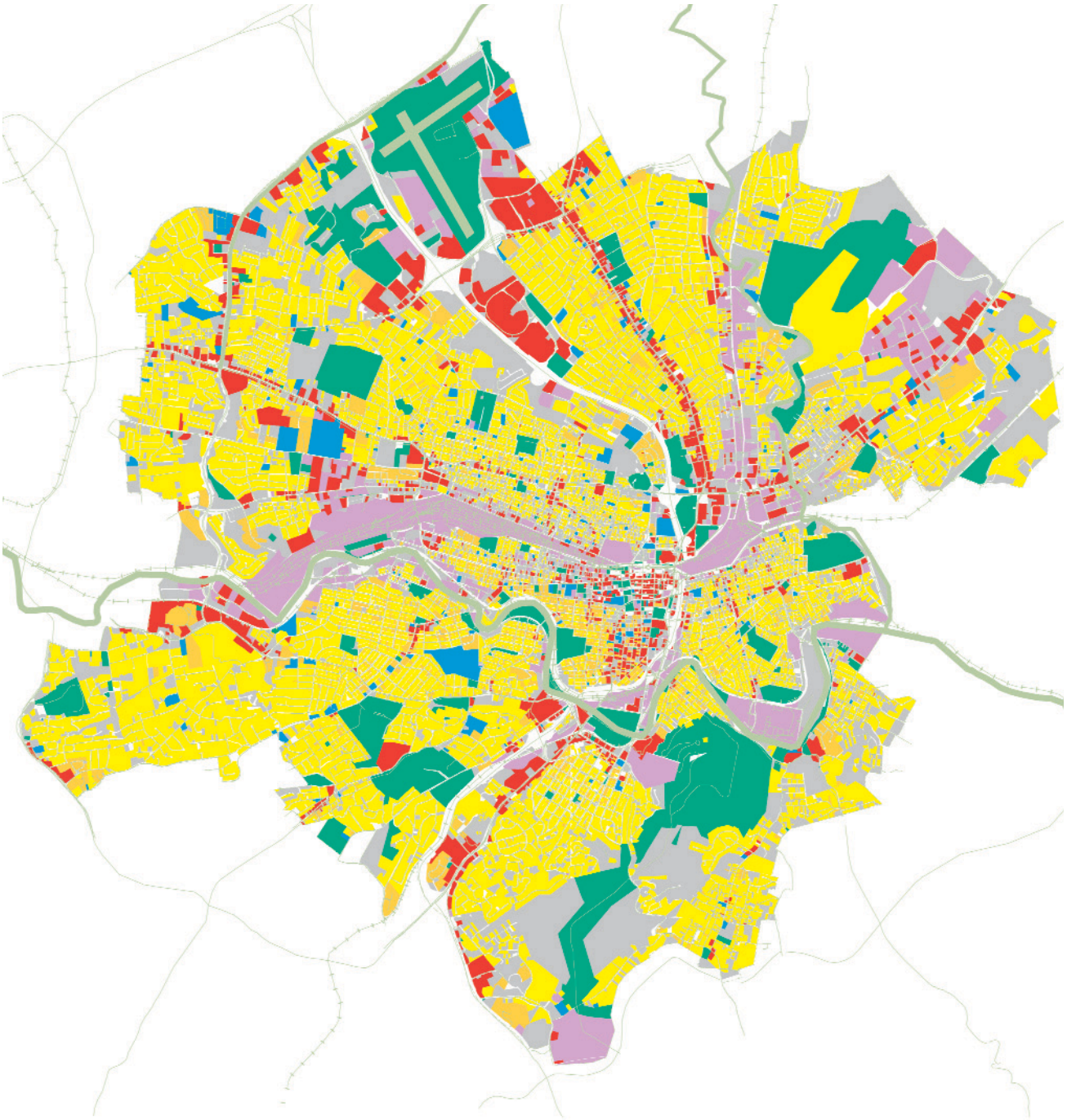
Zoning and Land Use: Opportunity Sites and Potential Conflicts

Roanoke's future land uses are to a large degree determined by what is allowed by the City's zoning ordinance, which regulates the use, density, and bulk of potential site development. Therefore, the plan's zoning map also contains an indication of where there are potential conflicts between existing land uses and what is allowed by zoning regulations. Some degree of difference is natural — the zoning map is intended in certain instances to be an agent of change.



Existing Zoning

- Single-family Residential
- Multi-family Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial



Existing Land Use

- Single-family Residential
- Multi-family Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- School/Public Facility/Park
- Religious
- Vacant

Before

After

ROANOKE DESIGN '79

In 1979, the City embarked on a revitalization plan for downtown Roanoke. A visionary city manager, Bern Ewert, recognized the economic development potential in Roanoke's historic neighborhoods and City Market. *Design '79*, spearheaded by the national firm of Moore Grover Harper, incorporated extensive citizen participation, a downtown storefront office, and a design-a-thon television show in the development of an aggressive plan for investing in and enhancing Roanoke's downtown. Following the plan, major public and private investment was made in the downtown neighborhoods, including renovations of the historic Farmer's Market. Roanoke later received an All America City Award for this effort. In 1995, Roanoke's historic market was named by the Lyndhurst Foundation as one of the Great American Public Places.

CHAPTER

THREE

PLAN ELEMENTS: THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE PLAN

vision 2001 2020

As described in the Executive Summary, this plan defines a vision for the future of the City. The vision is a future state based on the goals developed by citizens who participated in the public workshops and on the Vision Advisory Committee.

> A vision for 2020. In the year 2020, Roanoke is a growing, dynamic, and sustainable city that is focused on the future with a strong, diverse economy and a balanced and growing population that values and enjoys a high quality of life in a safe and attractive environment. Working together, the City and region boast a steady growth in jobs and residents, higher school scores, improved government services, and a broader range of recreational and entertainment activities. Through regional cooperation, the mountain views and ridgetops are protected and are easily accessed by a network of greenways that link downtown, neighborhoods, and regional parks and parkways.
>
> Roanoke's sustainability is measured not only by the health of its economy but also by its quality of life. Economic prosperity can be continued and enhanced by supporting our cultural and entertainment amenities, education, and other services. Protecting our natural environment, supporting a wide range of cultural and entertainment amenities, maintaining a first-class educational system, and providing ongoing educational opportunities will attract new residents and businesses.
>
> *— Taken from Executive Summary page 7*

To achieve this vision, the plan recommends specific policies and actions that will guide public and private decision-making and investment. The plan also recommends several strategic initiatives to proactively encourage development opportunities.

Vision 2001-2020 plan elements consist of four sections: background, policy approach, policies, and actions. The background information provides a thumbnail sketch of the current situation. The policy approach describes the intent of the plan and identifies initiatives. The plan's policies establish the guidelines for decision-making. The plan actions are implementation steps that must be taken to achieve the long-term vision and goals of the plan.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Strategic Initiatives are the key concepts of the plan. In developing the plan's elements, several key ideas emerged as strategies for immediate action. The overall theme of the initiatives is that new approaches are needed to ensure that Roanoke will be a beautiful, vibrant, and livable place that will attract new businesses and residents to an economically and environmentally healthy community. Several initiatives look at opportunities for housing development such as housing clusters and the reuse of underutilized industrial and commercial sites. One initiative recommends investment in promoting the City and the region, and another identifies the importance of developing a regional approach to protecting and enhancing the critical amenities that set Roanoke apart from other regions. A theme that runs throughout the plan is that for Roanoke to be truly successful in the new century, it must look for new opportunities to do business, see old places in a new way, and recognize and celebrate Roanoke's urban uniqueness.

The policies and actions in these sections of the plan apply citywide. Detailed neighborhood and area plans are adopted as components of the City's Vision 2001-2020 plan. These plans include more detailed strategies to implement the plan policies and actions.

Citywide Long-Range Development Plan

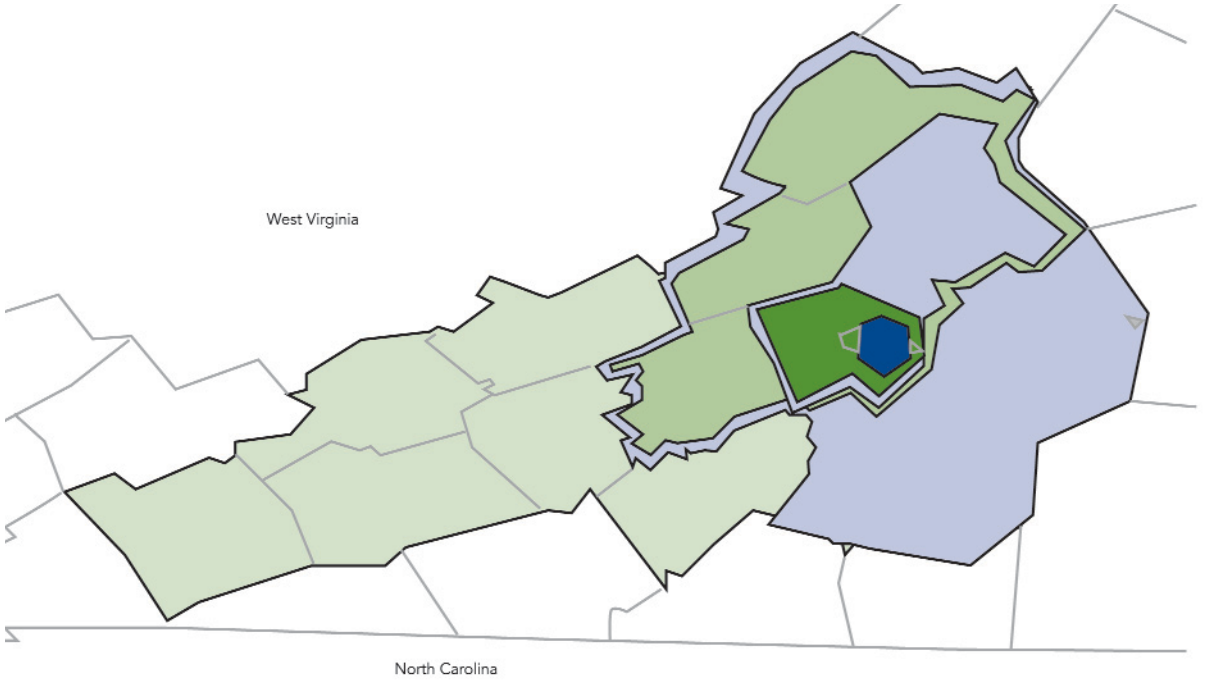
The City of Roanoke is one of several local government units in the Roanoke region. Maintaining and enhancing the high quality of life that is important to citizens in the City and the region requires the collaboration and cooperation of all of the jurisdictions. Many of the challenges that the City of Roanoke identifies are also challenges for the region. Critical issues such as economic development, natural resource protection, transportation, tourism, entertainment and cultural venues, and housing all require a regional perspective and regional solutions. Vision 2001-2020 includes not only policies and actions that will be implemented within the City's jurisdictional boundaries but also recommendations for regional approaches and actions that require intergovernmental cooperation.

Roanoke's Regions

Roanoke's regions can be defined in many ways and are viewed as great opportunities for residents, businesses, and visitors. The map on page 34 shows the general location of the communities that comprise Roanoke's regions.

- The Roanoke Valley is typically defined as including the City of Roanoke, Roanoke County, the Town of Vinton, and the City of Salem.
- The Roanoke Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is a much larger region that presently includes the City of Roanoke, Roanoke County, Salem, Vinton, and Botetourt County. This area is defined based upon census information.
- The Greater Roanoke Region is even more extensive and includes the MSA, the Counties of Craig, Franklin, Montgomery, and Bedford as well as the Cities or Towns of Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Bedford, and Lynchburg. Essentially, this region includes those jurisdictions surrounding the Roanoke Valley and those areas served by Roanoke's employment and commercial centers.

- The Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Planning District includes the Cities of Roanoke, Salem, Clifton Forge, and Covington; Town of Vinton; and the Counties of Roanoke, Botetourt, Craig, and Alleghany. This district is the official planning district established by the state.
- The New Century Region includes the Cities of Roanoke, Salem, Clifton Forge, Covington and Radford; Towns of Vinton, Blacksburg, and Christiansburg; and the Counties of Roanoke, Franklin, Floyd, Montgomery, Pulaski, Giles, Craig, Botetourt, and Alleghany. This region was established several years ago to increase the region's strength and visibility in western Virginia.



3.1 HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

BACKGROUND

Demographic Changes and Challenges

Roanoke's population has fluctuated over time from a peak of more than 100,000 residents in the 1980s to 94,911 residents in 2000. During this same time period, the population of the Roanoke Metropolitan Statistical Area has grown by seven percent, while the City's share of total population has declined by five percent. This data leads to two conclusions: 1) Roanoke is losing residents to its neighbors through out-migration; and 2) new residents are moving to the region but are choosing not to live in the City. Roanoke's median household income fell one percent from 1996 to 1997, while the median household income in Salem, Roanoke County, and Botetourt County rose more than six percent over the same period. The median household income in Roanoke County is nearly twice as high ($47,838) as the City's median household income of $27,492.

Neighborhood Development Patterns

Many of Roanoke's neighborhoods are diverse urban areas with compact development patterns and a mix of residential, retail, and office uses, along with parks, religious institutions, schools, and other public facilities. Traditional neighborhoods formed on the edges of the downtown area, with small neighborhood commercial nodes offering a mix of neighborhood-

oriented businesses and services. As the City grew, larger residential subdivisions developed on the fringes with commercial activity concentrated along corridors or in distinctly separate districts. In the 1970s, many of Roanoke's traditional neighborhoods were rezoned to allow higher-density residential use. Recent planning efforts have sought to reverse this trend by reducing the permitted density in many neighborhoods while focusing higher-density development around neighborhood commercial nodes.

Neighborhood Planning

Neighborhood plans provide detailed information for specific areas and guide public and private decisions regarding land use, capital improvements, and other projects. Neighborhood plans are adopted as components of the City's comprehensive plan. The City has identified 46 neighborhoods for which detailed plans should be adopted. Plans have been completed for approximately 25% of the City's neighborhoods; it is anticipated that all neighborhoods will have completed plans in the next five years. (See map on page 38.)

Housing Stock

Roanoke has approximately 45,000 housing units, 60% of which are single-family units. Approximately half of all dwelling units are owner-occupied. More than 90% of the City's housing stock was constructed prior to 1975; fewer than 6% (approximately 2,600 units) have been built since 1990. New residential development is constrained by the limited number and size of available sites. To significantly increase the number of new dwelling units in the City, a housing strategy could be developed that conducts an inventory of vacant lots that can be converted or redeveloped for residential, commercial, and/or industrial purposes.

Housing Conditions

In 1986, the City adopted a Building Maintenance Code that establishes a standard for building maintenance citywide. The Code is part of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code and is based on the BOCA National Property Maintenance Code. The City currently estimates that 1,050 dwelling units are substandard and should be vacated or undergo significant repairs. In 1996, the City established a Rental Inspection Program for rental housing within the City's established conservation and rehabilitation districts (see Map 3.1.1). The program requires an inspection of any rental unit every two years for compliance with the adopted building maintenance code. Designation of other neighborhoods and expansion of the program have been discussed as strategies for improving older housing citywide and ensuring decent safe housing for tenants.

Neighborhood Design District

Roanoke is the only city in the state with the legal authority to regulate architectural design outside of historic districts. In 1994, the City adopted a neighborhood design overlay district to coordinate the design of new construction in designated rehabilitation and conservation areas. Several neighborhoods located in the Rehabilitation and Conservation District were recognized as having unique architectural and historic value: Belmont/Fallon Park, Gainsboro, Kenwood, Loudon Melrose, Gilmer, Harrison, Highland Park, and Hurt Park. The first neighborhood design overlay district is expected to be established in 2001.

Fair Housing

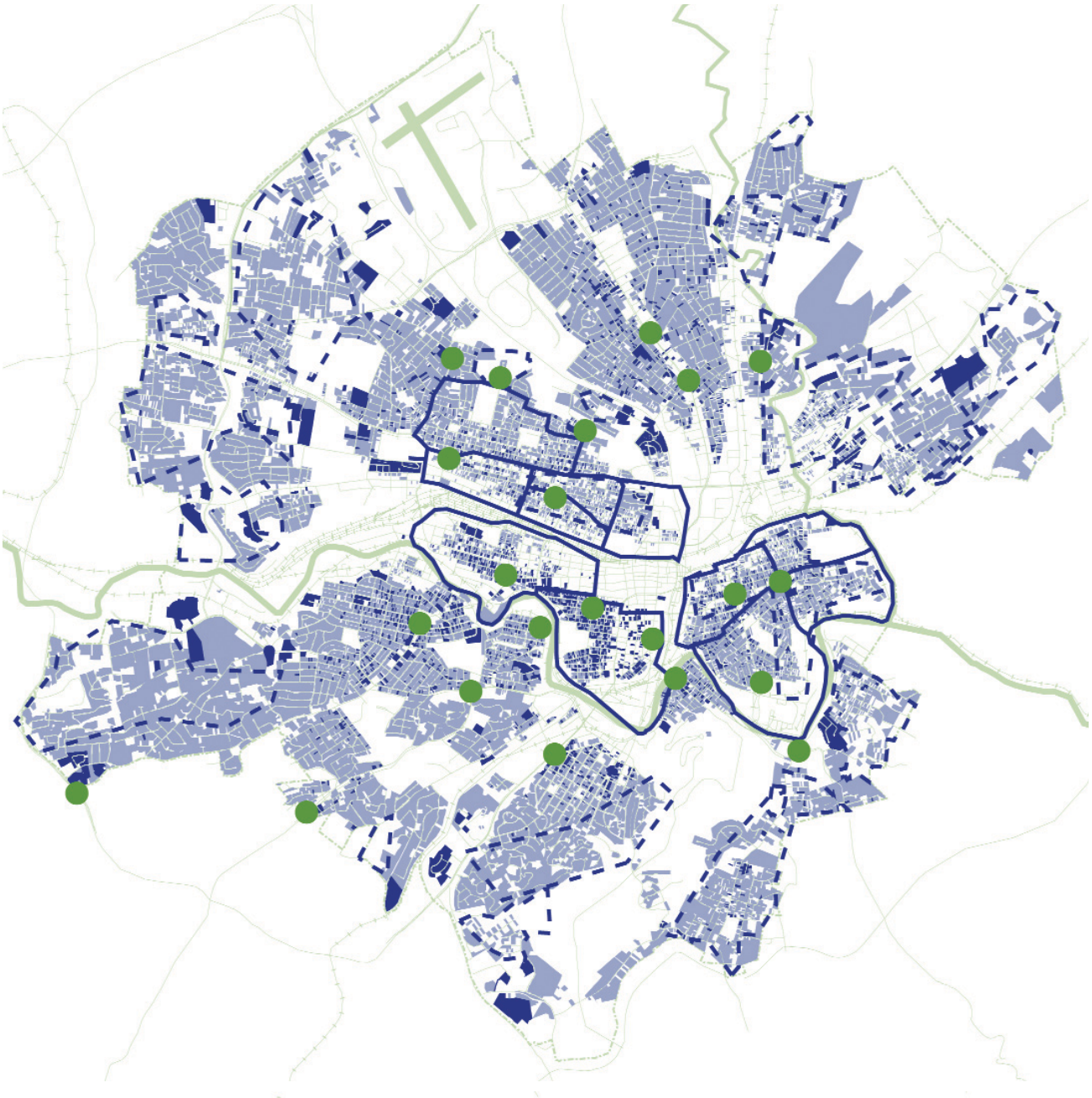
A recent Fair Market Housing study sponsored by the City indicates that Roanoke has a sufficient supply of affordable housing. However, most affordable housing opportunities are concentrated in certain inner-city neighborhoods, which are low-to-moderate income, thereby limiting housing choices citywide. Barriers to housing opportunities include the lack of affordable, good-quality housing in all areas of the City, limited access to information, the need for counseling on housing choices, and the lack of home-purchasing incentives for all neighborhoods.

Public Housing

The City of Roanoke provides most of the publicly assisted housing in the Roanoke Valley through the Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA), which owns and operates 1,467 subsidized dwelling units. The RRHA received a Housing and Urban Development HOPE VI Grant for the comprehensive revitalization of the Lincoln Terrace Public Housing Development. This grant addresses a significant portion of the repair needs of Roanoke's public housing stock. The HOPE VI program creates new home ownership opportunities, offers job training, facilitates neighborhood revitalization, and promotes the values of increased family self-sufficiency. The RRHA also administers other public programs to supplement the supply of affordable housing. These programs include Section 8 Rental Assistance Programs including the Section 8 Housing Certificate Program, the Housing Voucher Program, the Moderate Rehabilitation Program, the Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Moderate Rehabilitation Program, and Project Self-Sufficiency.

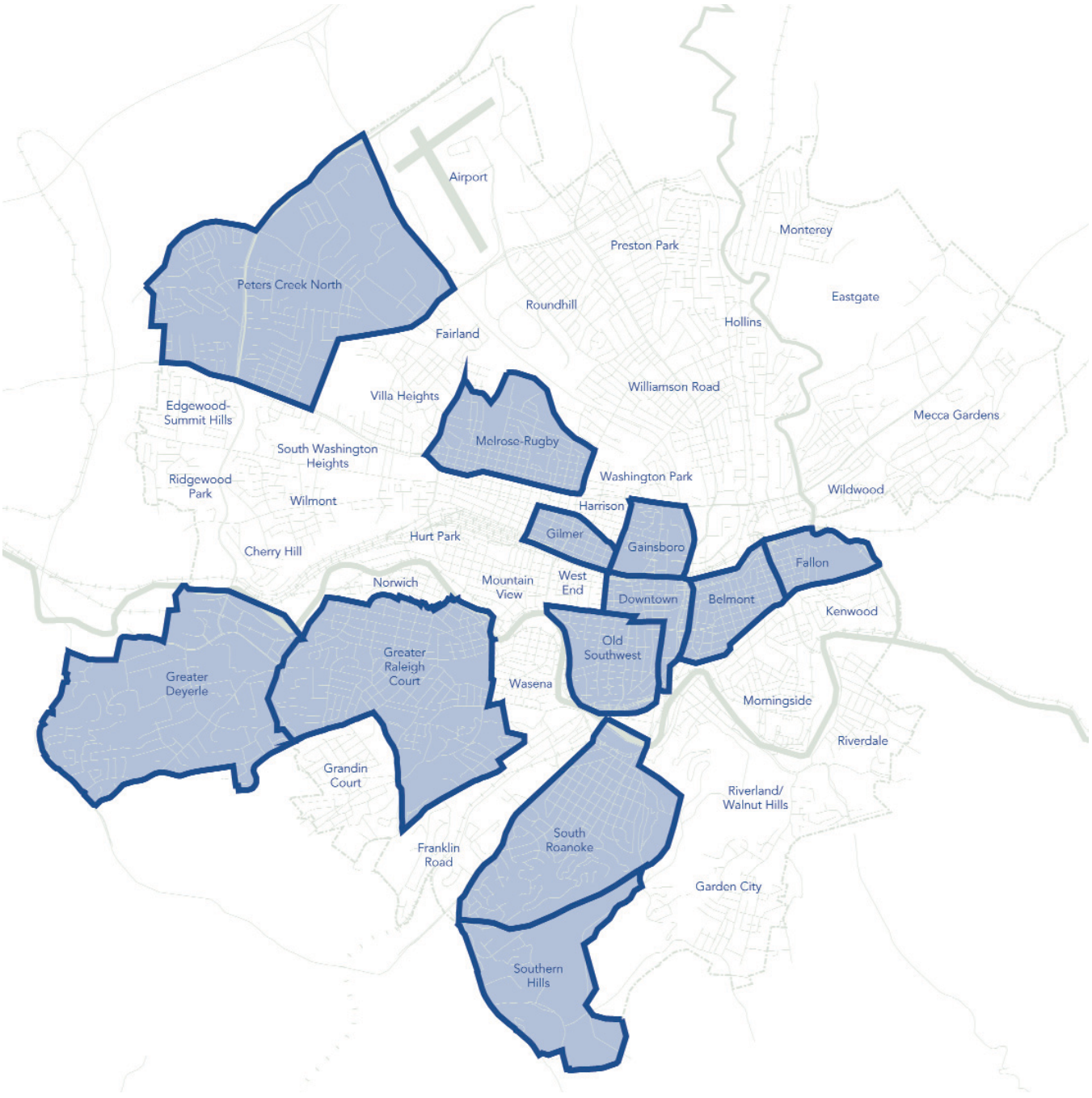
Transitional Housing

The City of Roanoke accommodates the majority of emergency shelters, transitional housing, and support programs for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness in the region. The overnight shelters and transitional housing centers are operated by non-profit organizations. The City of Roanoke operates the Crisis Intervention Center for youth. Resources for at-risk persons and the homeless include the RAM House, TRUST, Roanoke Valley Interfaith Hospitality Network, Samaritan's Inn, and Rescue Mission, which are located within walking distance of downtown.



3.1.1 Housing and Neighborhoods

- Single-family Dwellings
- Multi-family Dwellings
- Housing Opportunities
- Existing and Potential Village Centers
- Conservation and Rehabilitation Districts



3.1.2 Neighborhoods and Area Plans

Completed/Underway

POLICY APPROACH

Roanoke's neighborhoods are the basic building blocks in the City. The City's commitment to reinvestment in neighborhoods has been a positive impetus to retain and attract families to Roanoke. Unlike suburban jurisdictions where there is investment in development of new areas and expansion of services, Roanoke is a well-defined city that must be able to maintain a long-term strategy of reinvestment in both the physical and social fabric of existing neighborhoods. To achieve the goal of being a vibrant, healthy, sustainable city, every neighborhood should be an active participant in determining its own future.

Each neighborhood should have a sustainable balance of housing types, sizes, prices, and densities to meet the needs of current and future residents at all stages of their lives. Construction of new housing in Roanoke has fallen dramatically over the last two decades, while the City's existing housing stock continues to age. Like most mature cities, Roanoke has little land available for development of new residential neighborhoods. Infill housing on individual lots is not economically feasible in many existing neighborhoods. Only larger sites that offer the opportunity for multiple units will allow economies of scale that will encourage development of "housing clusters" that offer opportunities for a diversity of housing type, price, and scale. New sites must be created to promote development of housing clusters on vacant or underused sites within the City. As private market assembly of property is not always feasible, proactive public initiatives may be necessary to assist in packaging land.

Roanoke's neighborhoods should function as "villages," with downtown serving as the City's premier urban village. Higher densities of development should be concentrated around existing or planned mixed-use neighborhood commercial areas, with housing density decreasing away from the village center. Neighborhood parks, schools, and community centers should be maintained and improved. Neighborhood streets and streetscapes should encourage pedestrian activity and bicycle use. Streets and roads should encourage a compact urban form and not enable sprawl.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

Housing Clusters: Housing clusters are market-rate residential developments consisting of a mixture of residential uses (single-family, two-family, townhouses) on a large site, located within or adjacent to existing developments of established neighborhoods. Assembly of land for the development of housing clusters will promote neighborhood revitalization, replace derelict or neglected structures, and complement the surrounding neighborhood. Illustrations of a housing cluster, infill development on small parcel, and a large site in a traditional neighborhood development are shown in Chapter 4, City Design.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

Village Centers: Village centers are centers in neighborhoods containing a mixture of higher-density residential uses and neighborhood commercial uses. They serve as the focus of neighborhood activity. Village centers vary in size and scale depending on the nature of uses and size of the surrounding neighborhood. Smaller village centers are often contained within a single block, while larger centers may have a mix of retail and office space and are anchored by larger institutions such as churches or schools. Centers generally have fixed limits so that commercial activity does not encroach into the surrounding residential areas. See Chapter 4, City Design, for examples of village centers.

POLICIES

NH P1. **Sustainable population.** Roanoke will have a balanced, sustainable population. Roanoke will promote its urban assets, diversity, convenience, and affordability to retain existing residents and attract new ones.

NH P2. **Neighborhoods as villages.** Neighborhoods will function as villages, offering opportunities to live, work, shop, play, and interact in a neighborhood setting. Neighborhood-oriented commercial activity will be encouraged in well-defined village centers.

NH P3. **Neighborhood plans.** The City will adopt neighborhood plans for all neighborhoods. Neighborhood plans will address land use, zoning, transportation, infrastructure, neighborhood services, and the development of village centers and recognize those neighborhoods with architectural and historic value, among other issues. Neighborhood plans should include indicators for measuring neighborhood health and sustainability. Implementation of neighborhood plans will be considered in operating and capital budgets.

NH P4. **Downtown neighborhood.** Downtown will be developed as Roanoke's premier urban village with a mix of high-density residential, commercial, retail uses and live/work space.

NH P5. **Housing choice.** The City will have a balanced, sustainable range of housing choices in all price ranges and design options that encourage social and economic diversity throughout the City. Concentration of federally subsidized, assisted or affordable housing will be discouraged. The City will recommend ways to overcome impediments to fair housing by identifying barriers to housing choice, encouraging fair housing education to the community, challenging housing discrimination, and requiring affirmative marketing of developments using City funds.

NH P6. **Housing clusters.** Development of housing clusters will be used to encourage and promote neighborhood revitalization, replace derelict or neglected structures, and complement the surrounding neighborhood. A housing cluster is a market-rate residential development consisting of a mixture of residential uses on a large site located within or adjacent to existing developments of established neighborhoods.

NH P7. **Affordable housing.** Affordable housing will be available in all parts of the City. Sustainable neighborhoods require a competitive mix of affordable and market-rate housing opportunities.

NH P8. **Publicly-assisted housing.** Publicly-assisted housing efforts and shelters will be of the highest quality that enhances neighborhoods. Publicly-assisted housing and shelters will be equitably distributed in all parts of the region.

ACTIONS

Village Centers

NH A1. Revise zoning ordinance to encourage the development of higher-density, mixed-use village centers and strengthen site development, landscaping, and signage requirements in village centers.

NH A2. Identify and map existing and potential village center locations.

NH A3. Rezone existing and potential village center locations to encourage and accommodate higher-density development and a mixture of uses.

NH A4. Develop a strategy for improving existing village centers, redeveloping underutilized centers, and creating new centers in key locations through the neighborhood planning process.

NH A5. Consider ND, Neighborhood Design District, overlay zoning for qualifying centers in Rehabilitation and Conservation Areas to encourage compatible design of development in village centers.

NH A6. Develop interdepartmental and agency approaches to target public improvements in village centers.

NH A7. Locate City services in village centers, where feasible.

Neighborhood Plans

NH A8. Develop and adopt four to six neighborhood plans annually.

NH A9. Address the following in neighborhood plans: land use, transportation, public facilities and services, greenways, utilities, and economic development.

NH A10. Develop indicators for neighborhood health and sustainability.

NH A11. Involve neighborhood organizations, civic groups, and businesses in the development and implementation of neighborhood plans.

Marketing Programs

NH A12. Inventory and increase marketing of existing housing programs and incentives that encourage new residential development.

NH A13. Develop housing marketing strategy to identify new programs and incentives.

Neighborhood Appearance

NH A14. Increase infrastructure funding to improve and enhance existing neighborhood streets and streetscapes; explore alternative funding sources such as grants and private contributions.

NH A15. Strengthen neighborhood organizations and civic groups to develop neighborhood pride.

NH A16. Adopt design and performance standards for neighborhood streets, sidewalks, and tree canopies.

NH A17. Identify gateways, key intersections, and major corridors for physical improvement that promotes neighborhood identity and pride.

Downtown Neighborhood

NH A18. Revise zoning ordinance and review the application of the building code to permit development of live/work space.

NH A19. Develop economic incentives and review the application of building code regulations in the downtown to encourage residential development.

NH A20. Inventory and market vacant lots and underutilized sites for higher-density, mixed-use development.

Housing Strategy

NH A21. Complete a housing survey that defines and maps sustainability indicators on a citywide basis.

NH A22. Develop a housing plan as a component of the comprehensive plan. The housing plan should include guidelines for housing choice, sustainability, and social and economic diversity.

NH A23. Develop criteria for evaluating new residential development proposals to ensure compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods and support of the City's goals of a balanced, sustainable housing supply.

NH A24. Strengthen enforcement of building maintenance codes, revise Rental Inspection Program to include periodic inspections as permitted by law, and develop a strategy to increase geographic coverage of Rental Inspection Program.

NH A25. Aggressively market the Real Estate Tax Abatement program to encourage rehabilitation of older homes.

NH A26. Consider demolition of derelict or neglected structures, outside of historic districts, when:
- Rehabilitation is not economically feasible.
- Plans for appropriate redevelopment are approved.
- Redevelopment furthers the neighborhood goals for a balanced, sustainable housing supply.

NH A27. Identify and assemble vacant or underutilized land for the development of housing clusters. Consider using public or community development corporations to assemble property for housing development.

NH A28. Revise zoning ordinance to permit higher-density residential and mixed-use development for housing clusters. Where appropriate, rezone identified areas for development of housing clusters.

NH A29. Revise zoning ordinance to encourage quality infill development that reflects the character of the neighborhood including infill development standards.

Affordable Housing

NH A30. Develop a plan for the location of shelters, transitional living facilities, and day facilities that provides appropriate services in all areas of the City and the region, taking into account access to public transportation and proximity to other support services.

NH A31. Develop affordable housing plans including programs that include a mix of housing types and opportunities for both rental and homeownership as part of the housing plan.

3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL, CULTURAL, AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

BACKGROUND

Natural Environment

Roanoke's natural environment is one of its most important assets. The City's location amid the Blue Ridge Mountains, combined with access to natural resources such as the Roanoke River, Blue Ridge Parkway, Smith Mountain Lake, and parks, provides a natural environmental quality in an urban setting. Consequently, how the region conserves and protects the natural environment is particularly important to the quality of life for Roanoke's residents. Regional cooperation and joint environmental programs and protection policies are essential to maintaining the natural environment residents enjoy.

Parks and Recreation

Roanoke's parks system consists of more than 60 parks and eight neighborhood recreation centers located throughout the City. In September 2000, City Council adopted the *Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan* as a component of the *Roanoke Vision 1985-2005 Comprehensive Plan*. The master plan balances the customer requirements for larger-scale recreation facilities, such as an aquatic facility, with the benefits of smaller-scale neighborhood parks and open space. Funding for full implementation of the *Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan* has not been identified; the City has committed to incremental phases of construction or rehabilitation.

Greenways

Greenways are corridors of protected open space that are managed for recreation, conservation, and non-motorized transportation. In 1997, City Council adopted a conceptual greenways plan as a component of the City's comprehensive plan. The City currently has seven greenways in various stages of planning or development. Priority projects include the Railside Linear Walk, the Mill Mountain Greenway, the Lick Run Greenway, the Roanoke River Greenway, the Tinker Creek Greenway, and the Murray Run Greenway. Funding for greenways is a combination of City funds, in-kind/case donations, state grants, and federal reimbursement grants generally funded through the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21).

Storm Water Management

Roanoke's watersheds experience periodic flooding and are subject to non-point source pollution from storm water runoff, especially sediment from increased development. Erosion of stream banks is a problem requiring bank stabilization. Storm water inflow and infiltration into the sanitary sewer system have caused sanitary overflows with potential degradation of water quality.

In 1998, the City participated in a regional storm water management plan that recommends regional policies for managing storm water. Regional detention basins were identified, but there are high costs associated with acquisition and construction. The City has constructed two basins in the Peters Creek watershed.

Phase II of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit must be implemented by 2003 and a storm water discharge permit obtained by the City to address storm water quality. At the present time, the local municipalities are approaching this task on a regional basis. A storm water management authority may be proposed to manage a regional facility.

Roanoke River and the Flood Reduction Project

The Roanoke River is an environmental and economic asset that adds to the quality of life in Roanoke and attracts visitors and tourists to the City. The 1989 Roanoke River Flood Reduction Project is in final design and property is being acquired. Construction is expected to start in 2002. Construction will extend from the Water Pollution Control Plant to the west City limits. Flood reduction of up to three feet in some areas can be expected as a result of the project. The project includes a five-mile recreation trail extending from Wasena Park to 13th Street, S.E.

Air Quality

Air quality is an issue of concern for all of the municipalities in the Valley. The Roanoke Valley will likely be designated as a non-attainment area for ozone in the near future. It is expected that by 2002, regulations will be established by the Department of Environmental Quality to mitigate pollutant levels. This will mean implementation of measures to reduce pollutant discharges such as vehicle emissions and industrial discharge.

Tree Canopy

Trees and plants in general improve the air quality by converting carbon dioxide into oxygen. Maintaining and increasing the City's tree canopy will have a beneficial impact on air quality, storm water control, noise levels, temperature, and visual appearance. The City nursery stock is utilized to replace neighborhood street trees that are diseased or damaged. As the City adds new landscaping features, special attention will be paid to using plants that are tolerant to the urban environment, primarily indigenous species. The City's development regulations currently require all new development to include a landscape plan.

Cultural Resources

Roanoke is the arts and cultural center of western Virginia, exhibiting substantial historic and cultural resources for a city of its size. Located in downtown Roanoke, Center in the Square houses five major cultural institutions and serves over 500,000 people per year, making it the largest museum and performing-arts complex in the State. The historic City Market has become a central focus for arts and entertainment activities and is listed as one of the most livable places in America.

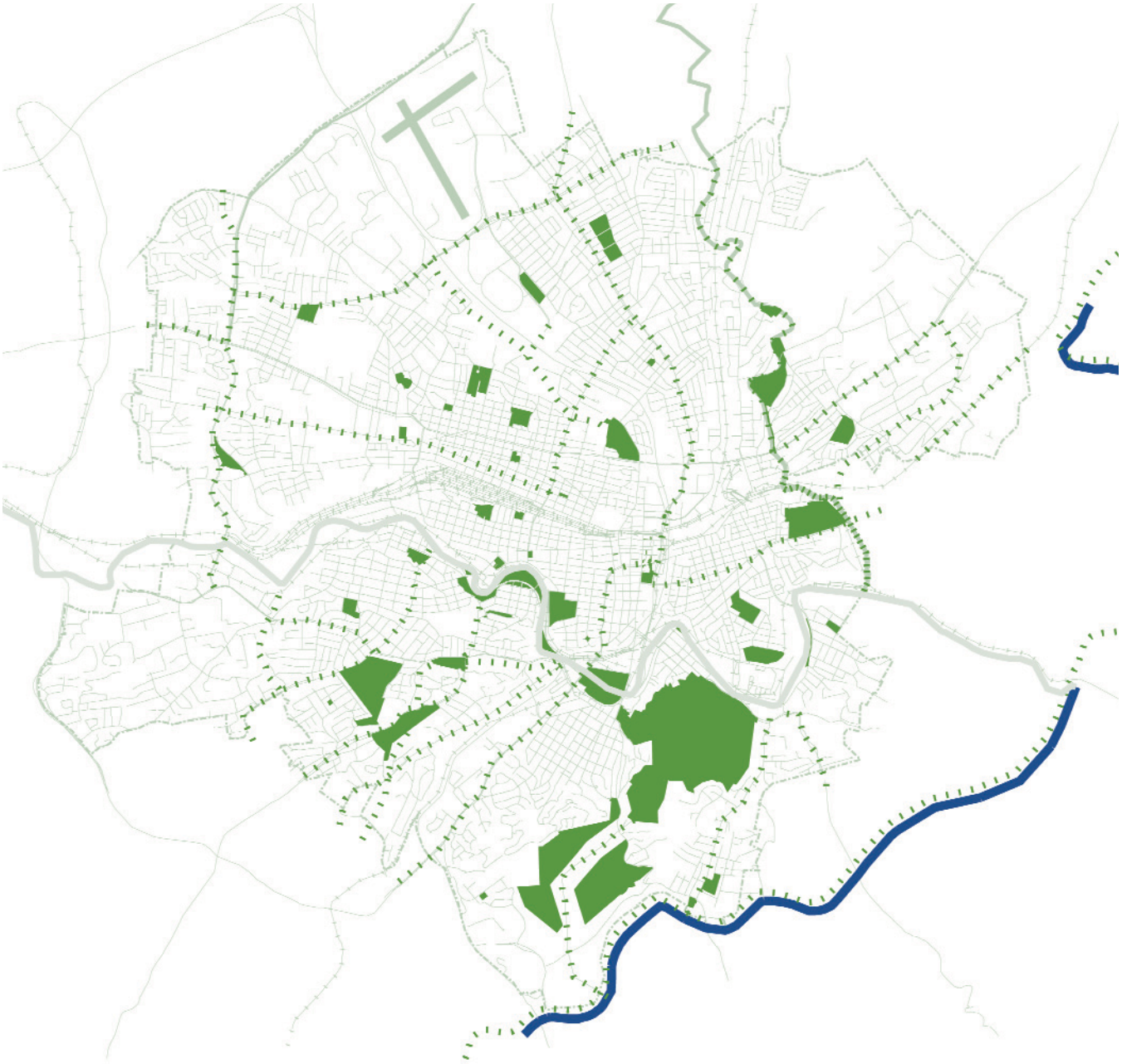
The Harrison Museum of African American Culture displays artifacts and memorabilia that preserve and interpret African-American heritage in southwestern Virginia and include art exhibits featuring local, regional, and national artists. The Roanoke Civic Center and Victory Stadium host special events. The Virginia Museum of Transportation is also a tourist draw that celebrates Roanoke's railroad heritage and the transportation history of the region and the state. The Dumas Drama Guild provides additional theatrical and cultural venues.

The Jefferson Center, a newly renovated facility located in close proximity to downtown, also houses several cultural institutions including the recently renovated Shaftman Performance Hall. Center in the Square houses several museums including the Arts Museum of Western Virginia, the History Museum of Western Virginia, and the Science Museum of Western Virginia, as well as the the Mill Mountain Theatre and the Arts Council of the Blue Ridge. Mill Mountain Zoo, located on City-owned Mill Mountain, provides an enjoyable animal attraction for both young and old.

Historic Resources

The City has three Virginia and National Register Historic Districts, which are also protected locally: City Market District, the Warehouse Row, and the Southwest Historic District in the neighborhoods of Old Southwest, Hurt Park, and Mountain View.

Historic designation has contributed to the City's revitalization through improved property maintenance and economic incentives for rehabilitation. Roanoke is currently undertaking a survey to identify additional historic structures in the downtown to promote further economic development and historic preservation strategies. The Historic and Cultural Resources map (Map 3.2.2) identifies the three Virginia and National Register Historic Districts, National Register structures, and potentially significant archaeological sites.

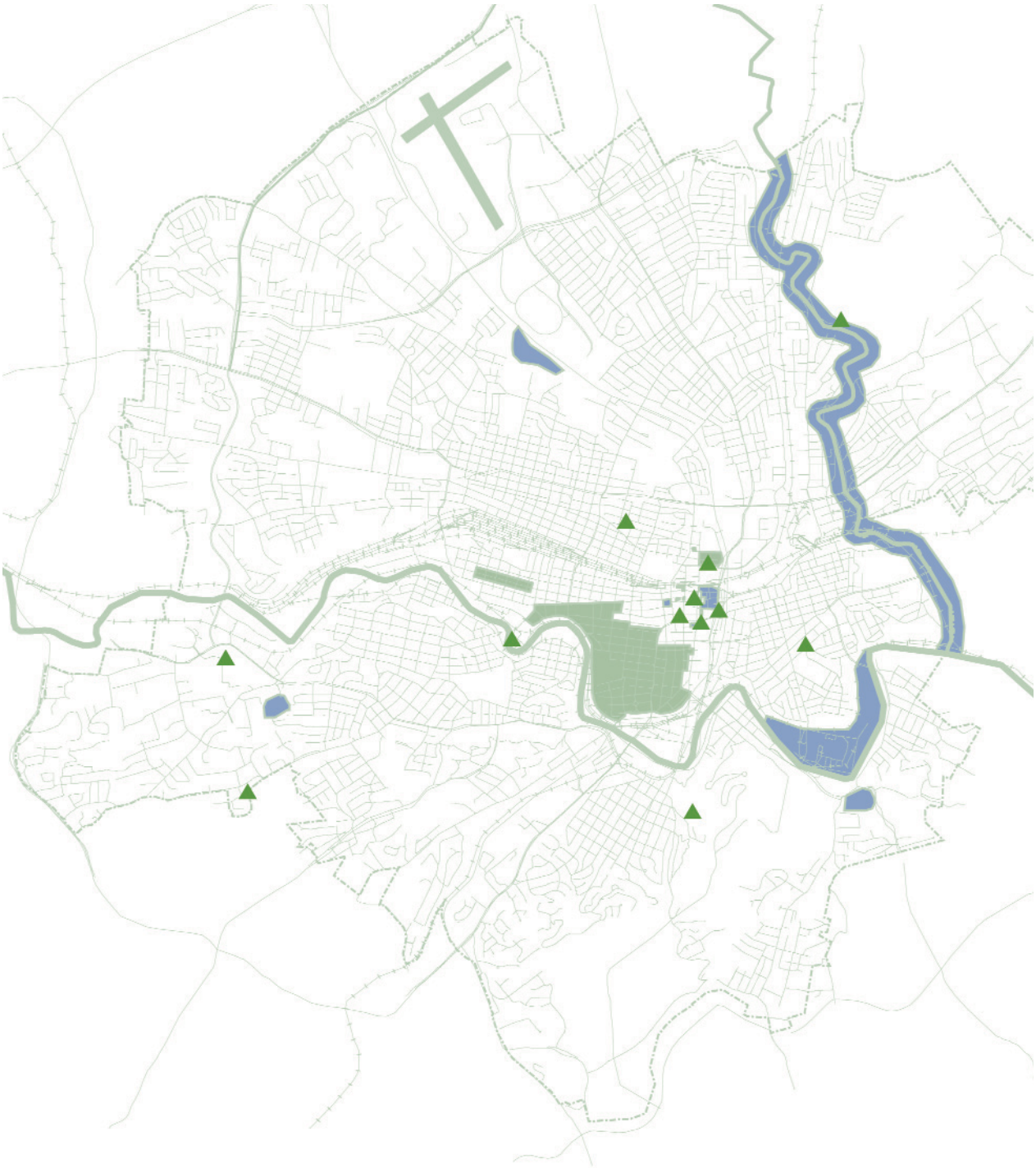


3.2.1 Environmental Resources

Parks

Proposed Greenways

Blue Ridge Parkway



3.2.2 Historic and Cultural Resources

- Local Historic Districts
- National Register Properties
- Sensitive Cultural/Archeological Resources

POLICY APPROACH

Roanoke's natural environment contributes to the overall high quality of life for residents. It is also an important economic development and tourism asset. Many high-tech entrepreneurs and employees place a high value on the overall quality of life in making decisions about where to locate. As the City aggressively pursues the growth of knowledge-based industries, the overall quality of life and quality of the natural environment will be critical elements to a successful development strategy.

While natural resources are abundant, they are also fragile and must be protected. Local action and regional cooperation are crucial in achieving the goals of protecting and enhancing our environmental quality, protecting our viewsheds and mountain ridges from developments, and developing a comprehensive network of greenways and pedestrian facilities throughout the Valley. Roanoke should work with surrounding localities to create regional awareness of the importance of our environment to our overall economic strength. Roanoke should resist the conversion of park land for other purposes without replacing it.

At the present time, each jurisdiction protects and manages the recreation, conservation, and open space within its boundaries. As many of these resources cross jurisdictional lines and enhance the quality of life for all Valley residents, it is appropriate to encourage further discussions on regional recreation and environmental management. A regional park authority could be a mechanism to provide larger recreation centers such as water parks serving a regional population or the conservation and management of large parcels of open space.

Trees and other vegetation represent both an environmental resource and an important landscape feature in the quality of life in the City. Maintaining and increasing the City's tree canopy will have a beneficial impact on air quality, storm water control, noise levels, temperature, and visual appearance. Additional initiatives could include a tree replacement policy when trees must be removed for site development. Regional efforts to preserve trees in the Valley would be beneficial to the entire community.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

Investing in Critical Amenities: Roanoke and the Valley face the challenge of maintaining and enhancing critical amenities such as natural resources, entertainment attractions, cultural organizations, recreational opportunities, and a well-designed cityscape. These critical amenities must be enhanced and expanded if the region is to fulfill its economic development potential and enhance the quality of life for residents. The regional community needs to define new methods to share the cost of maintaining and financing such attractions. Concepts such as the Blue Ridge Asset District and earmarking lodging and cigarette-tax increases are recommended as potential approaches.

Roanoke's arts, entertainment, and cultural resources are both a City and regional resource for tourism and economic development. Clustering activities that add a 24-hour vibrancy to downtown can be achieved by providing a mix of housing opportunities and quality retail space, as well as designating an area as a technology zone for new and emerging technology industries.

Roanoke's cultural and historic institutions generate more than $30 million a year in economic benefit for the local economy. Tax credits should be used to establish and expand National Register Historic Districts. To successfully market Roanoke as a destination for visitors and new business, it will be important to create a clear identity or "brand name" for the City and surrounding area.

The same energy, creativity, and enthusiasm that marketed Roanoke as the "Star City" must be used in developing a new name that will market Roanoke as it emerges as the biotechnology center of a multi-state region. A regional funding mechanism is needed to support a stable source of funding for the environmental, entertainment, and cultural assets and to develop an aggressive marketing strategy.

POLICIES

EC P1. **Parks and recreation.** Roanoke will develop, maintain, and manage parks and recreation facilities that enhance the City's and the region's quality of life.

EC P2. **Greenways.** Roanoke will develop a high-quality network of regional greenways for recreation, conservation, and transportation.

EC P3. **Viewsheds.** Roanoke will protect steep slopes, ridgetops, and viewsheds within the City as important environmental and scenic resources and will cooperate regionally to protect such resources located outside of the City.

EC P4. **Environmental quality.** Roanoke will protect the environment and ensure quality air and water for citizens of the region. Special emphasis will be placed on the Roanoke River and its tributaries. Storm water management will be addressed on a regional as well as a local level.

EC P5. **Trees.** Roanoke will maintain and increase its tree canopy coverage as a way to improve air quality. Roanoke will work regionally to promote tree planting and tree preservation Valley-wide.

EC P6. **Cultural and historic resources.** Roanoke will support, develop, and promote its cultural resources. Roanoke will identify, preserve, and protect its historic districts, landmark features, historic structures, and archaeological sites.

EC P7. **Blue Ridge Parkway.** Roanoke will protect the Blue Ridge Parkway and the spur within the City from development.

ACTIONS

Parks and Recreation

EC A1. Establish funding mechanisms to implement park plans (Phase II & Phase III) and greenways plan in a timely manner.

EC A2. Encourage regional cooperation to develop and manage parks and recreation facilities that serve multiple jurisdictions (e.g., large recreation centers and aquatic centers). Conduct an assessment of the parks and the recreational needs of the region and consider the formation of a Regional Park Authority.

EC A3. Consider establishing appropriate user fees for recreation facilities.

Greenways

EC A4. Develop strategies that encourage development of the Roanoke River Greenway for the entire length of the Roanoke River within the City limits. Consider developing an "adopt a greenway" program that encourages private and nonprofit sector involvement in the funding of greenways.

EC A5. Establish weekend bus service between downtown and natural resource destinations such as Explore Park, Carvins Cove, and the Appalachian Trail.

EC A6. Increase funding to accelerate construction of the greenway network.

EC A7. Promote trails on City-owned land, where feasible and suitable.

EC A8. Promote and increase access to trails and natural areas by providing parking, guide maps, and appropriate marking.

Views and Viewsheds

EC A9. Develop a viewshed protection ordinance and seek regional approaches.

EC A10. Encourage reduced light pollution from development, particularly in residential neighborhoods, by improving development or ordinances.

EC A11. Adopt zoning regulations that address communication towers to minimize their visual impact.

EC A12. Protect Blue Ridge Parkway corridors adjacent to City limits through coordination with adjacent localities and careful planning.

Water Quality

EC A13. Limit the amount of impervious surfaces to reduce runoff.

EC A14. Plant natural vegetation, preferably indigenous plant species, on land adjacent to the Roanoke River.

EC A15. Ensure integrity of the storm and waste water systems.

EC A16. Protect and stabilize creek banks by controlling storm water flow and preventing discharge through vegetative buffers, bioengineering, and other related methods.

EC A17. Protect the shorelines of the Roanoke River to enhance their scenic quality and protect water quality through a river conservation overlay and other appropriate tools.

Air Quality

EC A18. Promote programs that raise awareness and reduce air pollution through testing, education, incentives, transit, and other related policies.

EC A19. Consider use of clean-burning fuels to enhance air quality.

EC A20. Establish tree canopy goals that include standards for preservation and planting of native trees based on zoning district and density.

Environmental, Historic, and Cultural Resources

EC A21. Develop a comprehensive regional marketing strategy that promotes Roanoke as an outdoors destination (Blue Ridge Parkway, Carvins Cove, mountains, trails, on-road bike routes, Virginia Birding Trail, Mill Mountain, etc.).

EC A22. Expand walking and driving tours of historic and cultural resources.

EC A23. Develop a stable source of funding from regional resources for cultural, historic, and recreation amenities such as a Blue Ridge Asset District.

EC A24. Develop a local funding strategy for environmental programs, conservation easements, and cultural programs.

- Earmark lodging and cigarette-tax increases for tourism and critical amenities.
- Establish general fund matching grant program to leverage additional partnership funding.
- Consider voluntary contributions to critical amenities on utility bills.

EC A25. Develop entertainment venues for concerts on Mill Mountain and other open areas.

EC A26. Undertake a comprehensive inventory of historic and cultural properties and districts in the City and consider historic districts, where applicable. Solicit neighborhood and stakeholder input in the inventory, where applicable.

EC A27. Promote local, state, and federal incentives to include tax credits to encourage rehabilitation of historic structures.

Public and Open Spaces

EC A28. Revise zoning regulations to better address the placement of billboards in Roanoke and regulate maintenance of existing ones.

EC A29. Work with conservation organizations to identify critical open space or sensitive environmental properties and pursue the purchase of conservation easements.

EC A30. Encourage preservation of open space and farm land through appropriate land use programs.

3.3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

BACKGROUND

Regional Economy

The City of Roanoke is the hub of the larger regional economy. While the City, the Counties of Roanoke, Botetourt, Franklin, and Bedford, the City of Salem, and the Town of Vinton have separate political identities, they work cooperatively together as a metropolitan area. Over the past few years, Roanoke and 16 other counties, towns, and cities have worked to expand their economic influence to become known as the New Century Region. This expanded area of influence recognizes the interdependence of economic activity over a broader area. While many of these outlying areas have a greater abundance of vacant land and natural resources, the highest concentrations of commercial and retail businesses and medical services are in the City.

A recent economic study, entitled *Studies on the Regional Economy and Public Attitudes Toward Growth in Western Virginia*, indicated that employment and population growth has grown at a slower pace in the New Century Region than in the state and the nation. Increasing the educational attainment levels of the workforce and focusing efforts to attract industries experiencing growth (i.e., technology) were cited in the study as important economic objectives for the region.

Regional Approach

The formation of the Roanoke Valley Economic Development Partnership in 1984 was a significant regional effort among Roanoke and adjacent jurisdictions to create an organization responsible for marketing localities in the Valley to prospective companies. The Partnership has identified four target industries that enhance and support existing industries in the Valley: biotechnology, optics, information technology/software, and transportation-related manufacturing and services.

Economic Sectors

Roanoke's economic base has transitioned from a predominantly manufacturing economy to a modern service economy. By 1998, the service industry was the largest industry in the City, employing almost 25,000 or 33.1% of the labor base. Health care related activity accounted for one-third of the service industry, due to Roanoke's position as the regional medical center of southwestern Virginia. Today, Carilion Health System is the largest employer in Roanoke with over 6,000 employees. Trade (retail and wholesale) is the second largest industry, covering a 16-county trade area, which has a combined population in excess of 600,000. This population is located within a one-hour drive of downtown Roanoke and has an effective buying income of over $9.4 billion. Roanoke has had the highest per capita taxable sales in the Commonwealth for seven years.

Manufacturing is the third largest industry in the City, employing 13.2% of the employment base. A broad range of manufacturing companies is represented, producing buses, textiles and apparel, fiber-optics, business forms, and ceramic chip capacitors. Government is the fourth largest employer in the City. Local government accounts for 59% of these employees, 25% are federal, and 16% are state employees. Transportation is the fifth largest industry, while finance, insurance, and real estate ranks sixth. In 1990, the unemployment rate for the City was 3.6%, growing to a high of 5.6% in 1992. It dropped to an historic low of 1.6% in 2000. The Roanoke metropolitan area dominates the local labor draw area as well. In 1980, 10,500 people commuted into the City daily. In 1990, that number had doubled to 20,234.

Downtown

Roanoke's downtown continues to serve as the economic engine and cultural center for the region. It is the preferred office location in the City. An update to the downtown plan will be completed by summer 2001. The plan will address connections with surrounding neighborhoods, the South Jefferson Redevelopment area, and locations for residential and high-tech space. The downtown plan will include recommendations for new activity centers including a technology zone in the downtown to attract new technology-based companies. The downtown plan will also conduct a retail and entertainment assessment of the downtown area.

Tourism

Tourists and visitors come to Roanoke to take advantage of the excellent shopping and the broad range of entertainment and cultural events. Tourism contributed more than $200 million to Roanoke's economy in 1999. The Convention and Visitor's Bureau is the lead regional agency responsible for marketing the Roanoke Valley to tourists and visitors.

Industrial Development

Many of Roanoke's industrial uses are closely associated with the transportation system; the majority of the industrial land is located around railroads, major roads, the airport, and designated flood plains adjacent to the Roanoke River. The City's easy access to rail and major highways has made it a prime location for distribution centers. The regional airport, located within the City limits, is expanding its role as an air-freight center and passenger hub for the region.

Since 1983, the Roanoke Valley has attracted more than 70 expansions and relocations. They represent more than 9,700 jobs and $749.3 million in investment. Recent trends reveal that technology companies have chosen to locate in Roanoke, such as Precision Technology Group, Altec Industries, Spectacle Lens Group of Johnson & Johnson Vision Care, and InSystems Technologies.

Retail and Commercial Development

The Valley View Mall area, the City's largest regional shopping center, is in close proximity to the downtown and the airport and is easily accessed from I-581. This area has attracted big-box retail, such as Walmart, and a wide range of hotels, restaurants, and entertainment venues. The Valley View area is a regional destination and is important to the overall economic health of the City.

Workforce

The types of industry clusters Roanoke hopes to attract to the region require an educated workforce. The region's adult labor force had lower educational attainment levels than the state's adult population as a whole in 1990. Roanoke has made significant investments in education through the public school system and in attracting a consortium of higher education institutions to offer a range of programs in the newly renovated Roanoke Higher Education Center located immediately north of the City's downtown.

Redevelopment Efforts

In 2001, City Council approved redevelopment plans for the South Jefferson Redevelopment Area, which will house the Riverside Centre for Research & Technology (RCRT). The Carilion Biomedical Institute is expected to be the first tenant of the Centre. Virginia Tech and the University of Virginia will join Carilion in promoting biomedical science, engineering, and technology for research and development.

The City's role will be to coordinate planning, assemble land, build the infrastructure, and provide incentives that will encourage the clustering of health care, biotechnology, research, and supporting business facilities in the area.

Village Centers

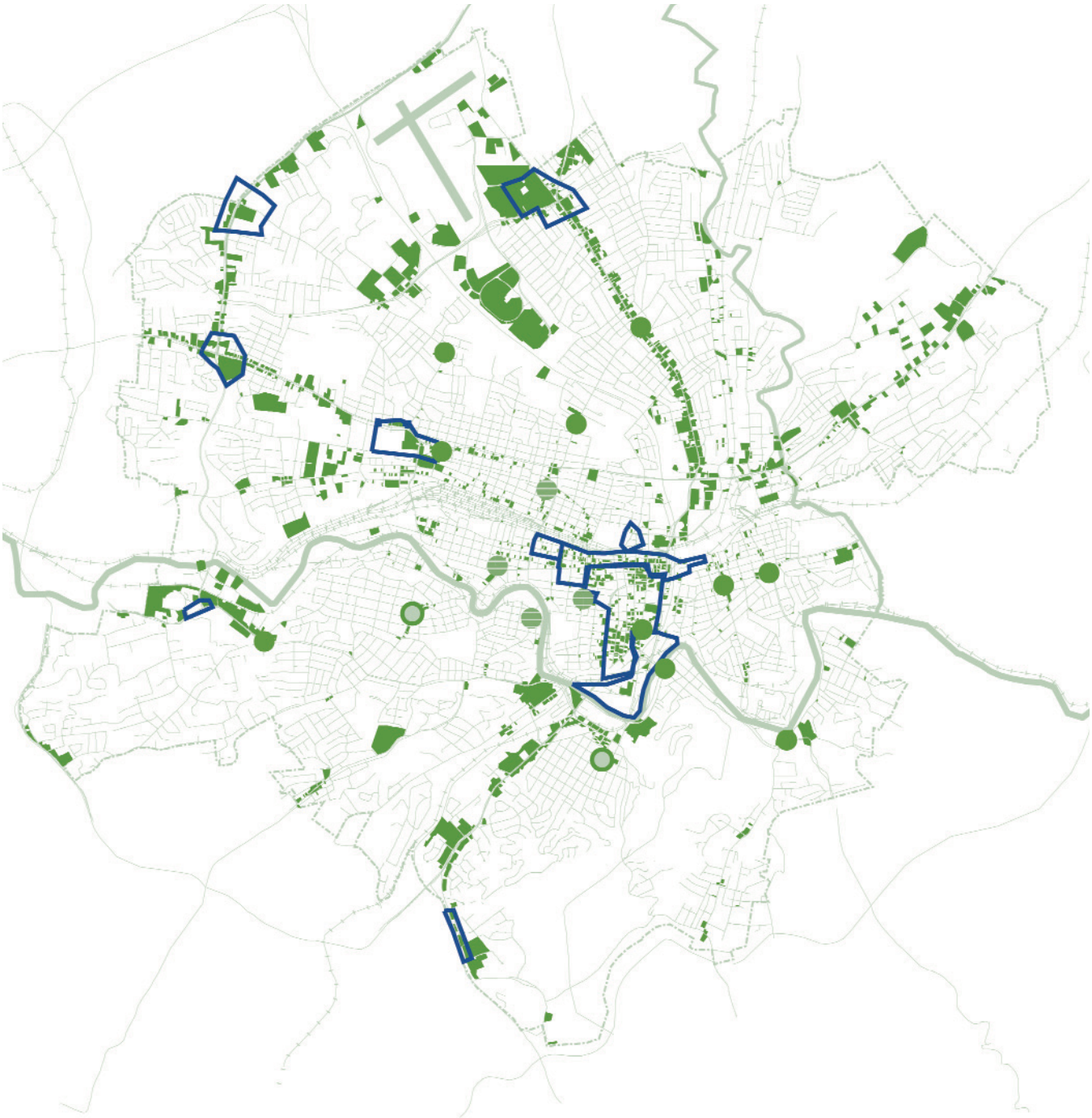
Many of Roanoke's traditional neighborhoods developed as "villages," self-contained centers that provided opportunities for people to live, work, shop, play, and interact in a local setting. Village centers offer amenities typically not found in suburban areas, such as convenient access to schools, local shops, and places of employment. Village centers contain retail, entertainment venues, and office space that contribute to the economic health of Roanoke.

Enterprise Zones

The Enterprise Zone program enables the state and a local government to enter into a 20-year partnership to encourage business expansion and recruitment by offering both state and local incentives. Roanoke established two enterprise zones. Enterprise Zone One was established in 1984 and is centered along the main east-west tracks of the Norfolk Southern Railroad. Enterprise Zone Two was established in 1996 and contains the largest inventory of industrial sites in the City covering the Roanoke Centre for Industry and Technology and adjacent areas.

Technology Zones

Municipalities use technology zones as an economic development tool to attract technology companies. Technology zones are designated areas that provide tax incentives and regulatory flexibility through the reduction of permit fees, user fees, and any type of gross receipts tax. The City may designate a technology zone in an existing enterprise zone for up to 10 years.



3.3.1 Commercial Development

- Commercial Land Use
- Development Opportunities
- Existing Village Center
- Village Center for Revitalization
- Potential Village Center

3.3.2 Industrial Development

Industrial Land Use

Development Opportunities

POLICY APPROACH

City investment alone is not sufficient to revitalize the economy. It takes significant investment from the private sector, coupled with the City's support, to sustain growth. These public/private sector investments need to be targeted to specific geographic areas and economic clusters to maximize their impact. Areas targeted should have the potential for significant job creation, leveraging existing industry, or enhancing community quality of life and access to services.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

Shifting Gears - New Economic Initiatives: Roanoke should pursue an aggressive strategy that develops and attracts businesses in the target industry clusters: biotechnology, optics, information technology/software, and transportation-related manufacturing and services. To accomplish this goal, Roanoke must invest in the critical amenities of entertainment, environment, and recreation to provide a high quality of life. The City must have a diverse supply of housing that offers choices for people of all age groups and interests. The City must also be a learning city that values lifelong learning and provides a strong core education for all students. Workforce Development Services at Virginia Western Community College provides continuing education, up-to-date training, and resources to support the technical training requirements of these industries.

Attracting and retaining businesses in these target industries require ongoing support for training and the availability of developable industrial land.

Roanoke must attract knowledge-based industries by having a pool of qualified workers, a research and development presence, telecommunications infrastructure, transportation services (air and rail service), water quality, non-interruptible power, and a high quality of life, which includes a vibrant, diverse setting. Roanoke has strengths in many of these areas, but it will take the concerted effort of many partners working toward the same goal to create a strong economic development climate. Roanoke should pursue an aggressive strategy that develops and attracts businesses in the target industries such as biotechnology, optics, information technology/software, transportation-related manufacturing and services, and supporting business services.

The plan encourages the development of commercial and residential centers as opposed to strip development. As an example, commercial areas along Williamson Road or Melrose Avenue could be enhanced by clustering a mixture of higher-density residential and commercial uses at key intersections. Applying the concepts in the village center initiative should be considered.

Roanoke has several older shopping centers and strip commercial areas. Many of these are located along traditional transportation routes such as Williamson Road, Melrose Avenue, Hershberger Road, and Franklin Road. Commercial strip areas are frequently characterized by

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

Redeveloping Underutilized Commercial and Industrial Sites: The economic success of large-scale retail in the Valley View and Tanglewood areas has changed consumer patterns in the City and region. Older commercial sites have experienced long periods of vacancy or change in use to light industrial (i.e., warehousing, and distribution). These commercial sites often have a single structure surrounded by large expanses of parking.

In the 1960s, the City rezoned a significant amount of land to encourage industrial development. However, some of those areas are still in residential use because the assembly of lots under multiple ownership was difficult.

In addition, the location of industrially zoned sites discourages development because of poor access to highways. For example, the industrial area bounded by Plantation Road, Hollins Road, and Liberty Road has an uneven traffic pattern characterized by four-lane roads changing abruptly to two-lane roads. Many industrial areas are located in the flood plain, which discourages development because of the additional development costs for infrastructure and flood insurance. Concepts for redevelopment of commercial and industrial sites are illustrated in Chapter 4, City Design.

small lot sites or older shopping centers, many of which have found new uses such as warehousing or outlet centers. Visual conflicts between residential and commercial uses are common to many of these areas.

Underutilized shopping centers and commercial sites can be converted to more appropriate uses that are assets to the neighborhood. These sites are frequently located on main thoroughfares and detract from the visual appearance of the community. By redeveloping these sites with showroom-type buildings along the street frontage and placing the parking into the newly created interior area, these sites can accommodate a range of uses from institutional to warehousing and showrooms. Revisions to the zoning ordinance to permit this type of development with greater site coverage, requiring zero setback from the property line, and establishing maximum parking requirements are ideas that can be considered as incentives to converting these underutilized sites to dynamic business centers.

Roanoke should market the rich diversity of its neighborhoods to attract young families and young adults. Neighborhoods with village centers provide opportunities to market housing, smaller-scale specialty destination shops, offices, and live/work space. Village centers should be supported by permitting higher-density residential development at the edges or above stores to add to the vitality and to serve as the transitional buffer between the commercial and lower-density residential areas.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

Selling Roanoke to Residents, Newcomers, and Visitors: Many of Roanoke's assets are well-kept secrets, even among native Roanokers. The challenge is getting the message out – and whom to tell. People often make decisions about where to visit, live, and do business based on their image of the community. Successful communities are able to develop and market a "brand" name that distills the core strengths and defines the characteristics of the place. A brand name should be clearly recognizable, consistently applied, and regional in scope to encompass the best qualities of life in the Roanoke Valley.

POLICIES

ED P1. **Economic base.** Roanoke will have a sustainable, diverse economic base that supports target industries in biotechnology, optics, information technology/software, transportation-related manufacturing and services, and supporting business services.

ED P2. **Regional economic development.** Roanoke will participate in and actively promote regional economic development efforts.

ED P3. **Downtown.** Downtown will continue to serve as the region's central business district with opportunities for downtown living, office space, retail, and cultural and entertainment attractions.

ED P4. **Tourism.** Roanoke will promote tourism for the City and the region.

ED P5. **Industrial development.** Underutilized and vacant industrial sites will be evaluated and redevelopment encouraged. Local policies and incentives and state economic incentives will strengthen the businesses and industries in the Enterprise Zones and provide jobs.

ED P6. **Commercial development.** Roanoke will encourage commercial development in appropriate areas (i.e., key intersections and centers) of Roanoke to serve the needs of citizens and visitors.

ED P7. **Workforce.** Roanoke will have a highly qualified and educated workforce to meet the demands of a knowledge-based economy.

ED P8. **Village centers.** Village centers will be pursued as an economic development strategy to strengthen neighborhoods and the City's economy.

ACTIONS

Economic Base

ED A1. Develop and implement an economic development strategy that attracts, retains, and expands businesses in the targeted industries such as biotechnology, optics, information technology/software, and transportation-related manufacturing and services.

Regional Economic Development

ED A2. Expand participation in regional economic development efforts. Continue meetings with elected officials and administrative staff in neighboring localities to discuss regional efforts.

Downtown

ED A3. Adopt the downtown plan, *Outlook Roanoke Update*, as a component of Vision 2001-2020.

ED A4. Support initiatives to develop a technology zone in the downtown that permits mixed-use developments containing offices, residential, and commercial/retail support services.

ED A5. Develop an entertainment strategy for the downtown market area.

ED A6. Pursue strategies to increase availability of specialized retail and live/work space in the downtown.

ED A7. Complete survey of historic structures in the downtown.

ED A8. Facilitate the development of significant regional attractions such as the IMAX Theater.

ED A9. Revise zoning ordinance to discourage demolition of downtown buildings being replaced by surface parking lots.

Tourism

ED A10. Develop a "brand identity" for Roanoke. Coordinate with regional partners to launch a marketing campaign.

ED A11. Identify and develop a consistent funding source for promotion of tourism, marketing, and special events that provides information for tourists and residents. Increase the current level of funding for the promotion of regional tourism through the Convention and Visitors Bureau and other related agencies.

ED A12. Develop and install directional signs that are clear, consistent, and strategically placed to identify major attractions that capture tourists.

ED A13. Provide transportation connections (i.e., shuttle service) to multiple sites such as Explore Park, Carvins Cove, and Mill Mountain.

ED A14. Promote greenways and linkages to the downtown and surrounding areas.

ED A15. Increase efforts to provide tourist information for residents and visitors.

- Develop a primary source of consistent, up-to-date information that promotes and advertises festivals, events, and tourist attractions.
- Develop and maintain a web site and list serve with public information.
- Expand efforts to market attractions and programs at the airport and other key locations.
- Create satellite centers for visitors at area shopping centers to capture local, regional, and destination shoppers.
- Develop a regional outdoors guide.

ED A16. Expand the current marketing strategy to target young families and young adults. Strengthen and expand the Newcomer's Club; create a junior newcomer's club that involves children and teenagers.

ED A17. Develop a youth hostel or other budget hotel accommodation in the downtown to encourage hikers and Appalachian Trail enthusiasts to visit Roanoke.

Industrial Development

ED A18. Identify underutilized industrial sites and promote redevelopment as part of Roanoke's economic development strategy.

ED A19. Support the redevelopment of the South Jefferson Redevelopment Area (SJRA) by coordinating with participating organizations such as Carilion, Virginia Tech, and the University of Virginia.

ED A20. Investigate a strategy for funding streetscape improvements in the Franklin Road gateway corridor (between SJRA and Wonju Street) to stimulate private sector development.

ED A21. Revise zoning regulations to encourage increased use of planned unit developments.

ED A22. Promote and market the Enterprise Zone program to existing and prospective businesses.

ED A23. Increase the role of the Industrial Development Authority and other related industrial redevelopment organizations for development of plans for areas such as the West End, Plantation Road, and Shenandoah Avenue corridors.

Technology Zones

ED A24. Develop an economic development strategy to attract, retain, and grow technology businesses. Designate a lead agency to coordinate programs, resources, and planning for development of technology businesses. Create a web site that promotes Roanoke to technology companies including information about available space, communication infrastructure, and links to other technology resources.

ED A25. Establish technology zones that provide special tax incentives, expedited development, and economic development assistance. Designate a section of downtown as the primary technology zone and key village centers as secondary technology zones.

Commercial Development

ED A26. Identify underutilized commercial sites and promote revitalization.

ED A27. Revise zoning and develop guidelines that encourage maximum use of commercial and industrial sites by addressing setbacks, lot coverage, parking requirements, and landscaping to encourage development of commercial businesses in centers versus strip developments.

New Economic Initiatives

ED A28. Initiate small-area plans for mixed use (i.e., residential, commercial, and industrial) and industrial redevelopment in the West End, Plantation Road, and Shenandoah Avenue corridors.

ED A29. Initiate small-area plans and appropriate rezoning for the Crossroads area to consider a mix of high-density residential, commercial, and research and development.

ED A30. Develop incentives and programs to encourage redevelopment activities that create attractive commercial corridors that address strip development and underutilized commercial centers.

ED A31. Revise zoning ordinance to permit small-acreage, mixed-use (flex-space) development.

ED A32. Revise zoning ordinance to permit home offices in certain residential areas.

ED A33. Explore redevelopment of areas identified for industrial, commercial, or mixed-use development or reuse such as:

- South Jefferson Redevelopment Area
- Franklin Road between SJRA and Wonju Street
- Crossroads Mall area
- Campbell Avenue between 5th and 10th Streets
- Roanoke Salem Plaza
- Shenandoah Avenue
- Plantation and Hollins Road area

Area plans for these sites should include participation of stakeholders and design professionals.

Work Force

ED A34. Invest in education and training to create a labor force that can succeed in an information-based economy.

ED A35. Support and expand workforce development efforts that link economic development agencies and educational institutions. Develop work/study (co-operative) programs linking existing industry, high schools, colleges, and economic development agencies.

Village Centers

ED A36. Encourage village centers through identification of potential locations in neighborhood plans.

ED A37. Develop design guidelines for village centers.

ED A38. Revise zoning ordinance to permit mixed-use residential/commercial development and live/work space in village centers and on the periphery of the central commercial areas.

3.4 INFRASTRUCTURE: TRANSPORTATION, TECHNOLOGY, UTILITIES

BACKGROUND

Transportation

Roanoke's transportation system is a network of local and regional roads, freight rail (east-west, north-south), airport, transit, and an evolving system of greenways and bikeways. The major interstate and regional routes are I-81, I-581, U.S. 220/Roy L. Webber Expressway, U.S. 460, and U.S. 11. Norfolk Southern provides freight rail service. Passenger and freight air service are provided through the Roanoke Regional Airport. Valley Metro provides bus transit and paratransit service.

The City, with cooperation and funding from the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), is responsible for planning and maintaining its roads, greenways, bikeways, and other transportation facilities. Roanoke participates in a regional Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The MPO develops the long-range transportation plan, regional greenway plan, regional bikeway plan, transportation improvement program, and other transportation plans.

Road System

The road system is an interconnected grid providing easy access via multiple routes throughout Roanoke. However, in outlying areas in southwest and northwest that developed after World War II, the street system is more suburban in character with cul-de-sac streets. The conventional suburban road pattern requires longer drives and concentrates traffic on fewer, larger roads.

Several major road projects were completed in the 1990s.

- Peters Creek Road was extended from Melrose Avenue to Brandon Avenue.
- The Valley View Interchange on I-581 provided easier access to Valley View Mall and surrounding commercial development.
- The Gainsboro Road project linked 2nd Street in downtown with Orange Avenue near I-581.
- Removal of the Hunter Viaduct in downtown was completed.
- Fifth Street - between Norfolk Avenue and Gilmer Avenue - was improved.

However, some improvements have not contributed to sustainable forms of development. Design guidelines are needed to address this issue. As shown on Map 3.4.1, several projects have been identified as priorities for further study:

- A new interchange from the Roy L. Webber Expressway to Reserve Avenue/Jefferson Street to provide access to the Riverside Centre for Research and Technology.
- Reconfiguration of the Elm Avenue/I-581 interchange.
- Tenth Street, N.W., safety improvements from Gilmer Avenue to Williamson Road (consideration may be given to extending the improvements southward to the Wasena Bridge area).

- Thirteenth Street, S.E., widening from Jamison Avenue north to Hollins Road, with construction of a bridge over the railway tracks.

- Wonju Street, S.W., extension from Colonial Avenue to Brandon Avenue.

VDOT has studied alternative routes for a new Interstate 73, to be routed from the Virginia-North Carolina border, and made its recommendations to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB). The CTB chose the route that goes through the City and eastward. The location of I-73 will have significant effects on the City and the Valley depending on the corridor selected for construction. Additional land use planning, urban design of the road and adjacent intersections, and mitigation of environmental impacts will be important considerations in the near future.

Pedestrian Systems

Roanoke encourages sidewalks within the City. Sidewalks are considered important assets for residential neighborhoods in that they enhance the quality of life, in addition to providing safe access for pedestrians. The City funds sidewalks annually, but funds have been limited and there have been more requests for repairs, replacement, and new sidewalks than available funds can provide.

Greenways

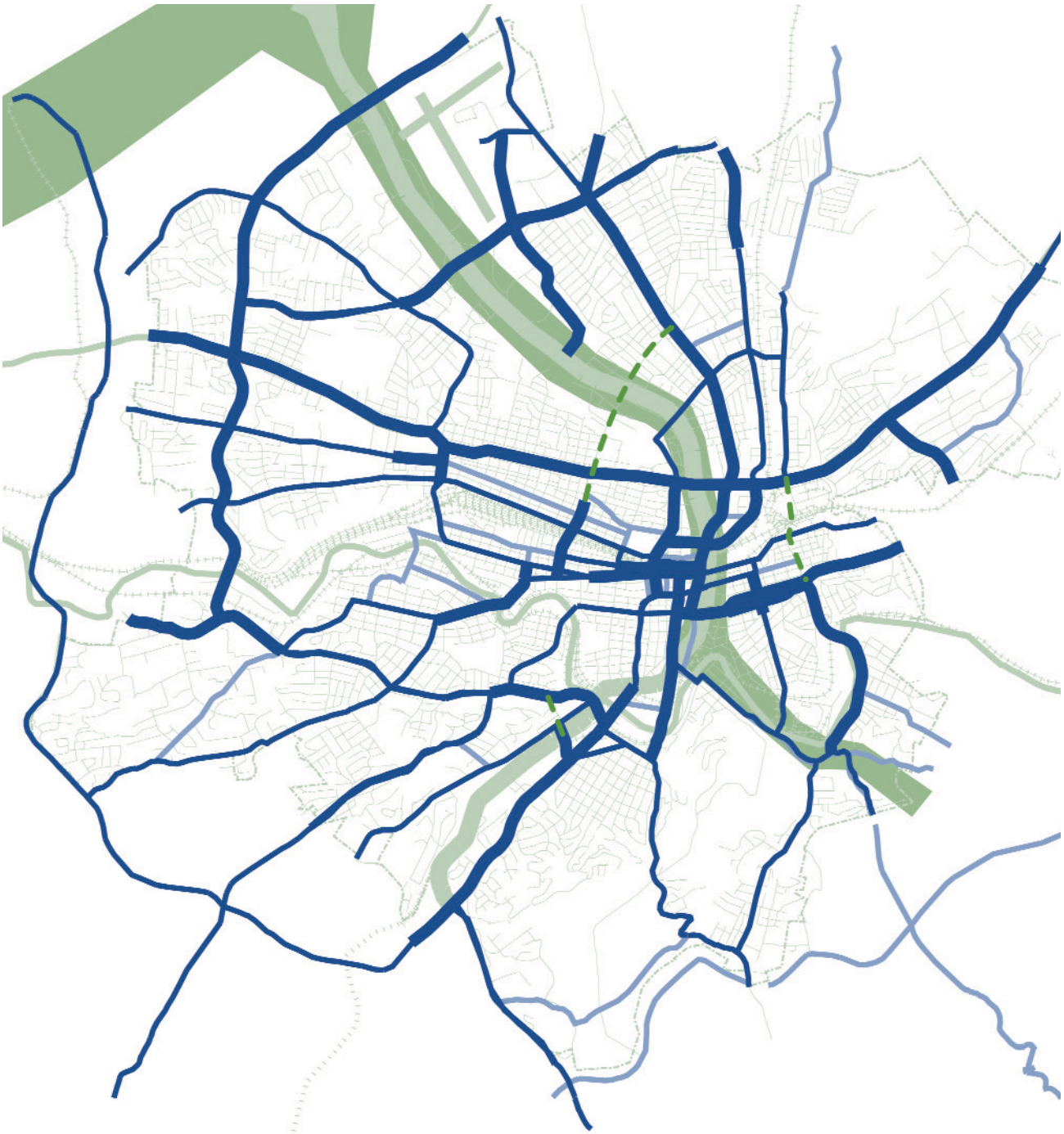
Greenways are corridors of protected open space that are managed for recreation, conservation, and non-motorized transportation. Many of the proposed greenways include recreational-use trails. Greenway planning is done in accordance with an adopted *Roanoke Valley Conceptual Greenways Plan*. Current projects under construction or funded for construction are Lick Run, Mill Mountain, Murray Run, Tinker Creek, and Roanoke River Greenways. Bikeways are also planned on the regional level; the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission coordinates and updates the bikeway plan for the Roanoke Valley. The location of current and proposed greenways and bikeways is shown on Map 3.4.2.

Transit System

The Greater Roanoke Transit Company, Inc., operates Valley Metro, which provides local bus transit service. Routes are based on demand and generally serve major employment centers, commercial destinations, and neighborhoods in Roanoke. Some routes extend into Roanoke County, Salem, and Vinton. Campbell Court Transportation Center in downtown is the central hub of the system. The Downtown Express, a pilot program providing shuttle service between Civic Center parking and downtown, began in 2000. The RADAR program provides public transportation for citizens with special needs. The transit system is shown on Map 3.4.3.

Airport and Air Service

Roanoke Regional Airport provides full-service passenger and freight air service and is the primary airport serving southwestern Virginia. The airport has approximately 90 scheduled passenger flight arrivals and departures per day, accessing twelve major cities with nonstop service. A five-member commission that includes representatives of the City and Roanoke County governs the airport's operations. The airport has made major improvements in recent years to ensure its competitiveness, such as a new terminal and runway extension. A new tower is planned along with other improvements. Project Nexus is a regional project to increase the airport's competitiveness by promoting low-fare, daily express service between Roanoke Regional Airport and Dulles International Airport.



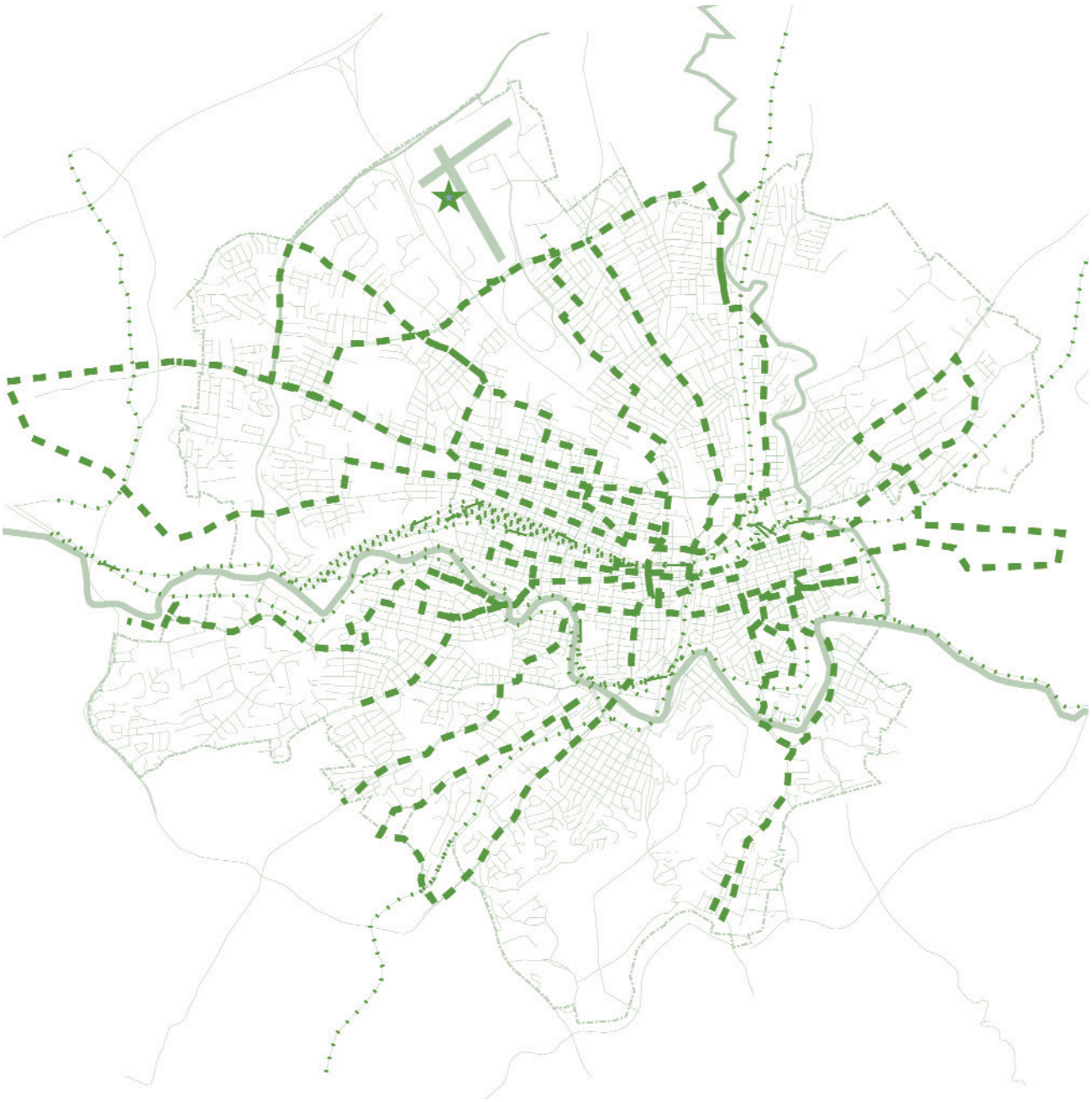
3.4.1 Transportation System

- Highway
- Arterial Road
- Collector Road
- Local Access Road
- I-73 Corridor (State Recommended)
- Recommended Road Projects (2000-2002 Transportation Improvement Program)

3.4.2 Greenways and Bikeways

Greenway/Bikeway

Bikeway Only



3.4.3 Transit, Rail, and Air

Transit Coverage

Rail Line

Airport

Rail System

Norfolk Southern (formerly Norfolk and Western) Railway provides freight rail service. Once headquartered in Roanoke and the major employer for the region, Norfolk Southern still retains a major presence in the City, and Roanoke enjoys excellent connections to the national rail network. The railroad discontinued passenger service in the 1980s. An initiative is underway to develop the Old Dominion Express, which would provide passenger rail service from Bristol, through Roanoke and Richmond, to Washington, DC. This service would provide access to major North-South lines from New York to Florida.

Technology

As Roanoke makes the shift from an industrially-based economy to an information-based economy, the same investment in infrastructure that laid down railroad tracks and built highways must be made in technology infrastructure. Technology infrastructure is more than the physical infrastructure of a fiber-optic communications network. It includes buildings, workforce, local government policy, and intellectual infrastructure. Ready-to-occupy buildings and warehouses with historic character and flexible leases known as "Heritage Space," coupled with a highly trained workforce and innovative tax structure and incentives, are all critical elements to attracting knowledge-based industries to technology districts.

Utilities

Private corporations provide electric power (American Electric Power), local telephone (Verizon) and natural gas (Roanoke Gas) utilities, with operations, rates, and services regulated by the State Corporation Commission. Cox Communications provides cable television through a franchise agreement granted by the City. Five companies provide fiber-optic and other telecommunications infrastructure. Water and sewer service are provided by the City.

The City has three major sources of water supply: Carvins Cove Reservoir, Crystal Spring, and Falling Creek Reservoir. Carvins Cove provides approximately two-thirds of the water supply. All are good sources of high-quality water requiring very little treatment. In 1994, Roanoke completed a project that linked the three water sources. In 1999, the City increased connections to the County water supply system to improve reliability. Water distribution lines cover nearly the entire City, and utility extensions are done on an as-needed basis, usually for new infill development.

Wastewater treatment is provided at a regional treatment plant located in the City of Roanoke. The plant and the Roanoke River Sewer Interceptor line have been upgraded recently. As with water lines, sewer lines cover nearly the entire City, and extensions are generally made on an as-needed basis. Maintenance of the existing lines and reducing rainwater infiltration have been the primary focus for the City. In some of the City's older neighborhoods, sewer lines are experiencing deterioration because of the age of the clay pipes. In other areas, rain gutters and floor drains empty directly into the sewer system instead of the storm drainage system. The infiltration and inflow of rainwater in the sewer system can cause temporary overloads, placing additional stress on the wastewater treatment plant.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

Improving Streetscapes: Good street design supports multiple modes of transportation and adds value to the adjoining properties. It is essential to the continuing revitalization of downtown, neighborhoods, and commercial areas. A street-design manual will address the design of new and existing streets and will provide guidance for planning and implementing improvements to create "Great Streets." Roanoke's streetscapes should be welcoming and attractive multi-modal linkages that carry vehicle traffic, pedestrians, and bicycles safely and efficiently to and from their destinations. Recognizing the importance of creating an urban network of streets within the City, guidelines for street design will be based on a street classification system that balances the purpose of the roadway with the impacts on the surrounding areas.

POLICY APPROACH

Transportation

Roanoke's transportation system should be an integrated and user-friendly network of well-designed streets that support auto, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic. One of Roanoke's characteristics in the region is that it is an urban community with a compact development pattern and effective street grid. The street grid should be preserved, and new development should tie into the existing road network, completing the street grid where possible. Greenways and bikeways should be linked as both transportation and recreational opportunities. Bicycle facilities and pedestrian improvements should be considered a fundamental part of land use and transportation planning.

The public transit system is an important element of an urban transportation plan and should provide access to employment nodes, recreation, and cultural venues, as well as retail and commercial areas. As Roanoke becomes more economically diversified, the traditional pattern with downtown as the hub may need to be expanded to include east/west and north/south routes linked directly to employment or retail nodes.

At state and federal levels, studies are underway to provide an interstate transportation facility (I-73) in the existing I-581 corridor, passing through the City to the southeast. In the design and construction phases of proposed improvements, streetscape elements consistent with the streetscape and corridor design recommendations of the plan should be included to enhance the appearance and help mitigate negative impacts. Such streetscape elements may include extensive landscaping, installing sidewalks or trails linked to existing pedestrian facilities, providing decorative lighting, and unified signage. Special care should be taken to make new improvements compatible with existing neighborhoods and downtown, and improvements should protect adjacent areas from noise and unnecessary traffic.

Parking in residential areas typically is not an issue; however, areas where there are businesses or institutions have some parking conflicts that may require residential parking permits to limit the time of day or duration of non-residential parking. Neighborhood commercial, commercial, and multi-family residential parking standards should be in keeping with the projected impact, while seeking creative solutions such as shared parking capacity to limit the

amount of impervious surfaces. Where possible, parking should be located in the interior of the development or in the rear or on the side of buildings buffered from the roadway by landscaping. Access to parking by alleys can be an alternative to reduce the impact of cars entering and exiting lots on neighborhood streets.

Significant improvements have been made to the airport facilities and runways since 1985. The air terminal is an attractive gateway to the City and the region. Current estimates are that more than 80% of the passengers arriving at the airport are traveling to destinations outside of the metropolitan area, such as Blacksburg.

The addition of an airport shuttle that connects with major destinations such as shopping, hotels, downtown, and restaurants may encourage passengers to visit Roanoke as part of their overall travel plans. The Roanoke Regional Airport Commission has been successful in attracting air freight businesses to locate in the area. The development of freight handling businesses on Commission-owned land as part of the airport facility can increase the profitability of the operation. In response to concerns regarding the number of cost-competitive daily flights, the Fifth Planning District Regional Alliance and the City of Roanoke, along with localities in the region, have sponsored a pilot project, Project Nexus, to promote low-fare, daily express service from the Roanoke Regional Airport to Dulles International Airport. Similar links to other destinations rather than hub cities are needed. Projects such as this are important for economic development and tourism.

Technology Infrastructure

Roanoke's primary role in encouraging new technology and associated businesses is to provide access to public rights-of-way for telecommunications infrastructure. The City can take a proactive role by ensuring that any in-road utility improvements include the installation of conduit for future use by service providers. The current system should be mapped to identify areas where fiber optic cabling and/or conduit are available and buildings that have been renovated to provide access.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

Getting Wired: This initiative focuses on creating an environment for technology businesses by providing infrastructure, office space, workforce, and supportive government policies. Technology companies seek flexible work spaces with short-term leases and access to high-speed communications. Software businesses often prefer buildings and warehouses with historic character, commonly known as "Heritage Space." Technology companies require an educated workforce with professional and technical skills. Their primary investment is frequently in the intellectual ability of their employees. Tax structures and economic development incentives should recognize the special needs of technology businesses. State legislation allows the establishment of technology zones where special incentives are available.

A fast, accessible, inexpensive, and reliable telecommunications system and a primary technology zone should be developed in the downtown, along with secondary technology zones in selected village centers. The future trend in telecommunications will include greater reliance on wireless technology, which will provide greater flexibility in location but is not expected to eliminate the requirements for wired connections that provide greater security.

Technology is also providing better access and communication between citizens and government. The idea of e-Government has been gradually developing in Roanoke and needs to be embraced as a medium for providing information to citizens and providing access to City government services.

Utilities

Increasing regional cooperation and agreements to develop additional water sources to meet current and future residential, commercial, and industrial needs are important to Roanoke and the Valley. Replacement of water lines to ensure quality service, upgrades to sanitary sewer lines to eliminate inflow and infiltration of storm water, and creation of a regional utility to manage storm water are needed. Water supplies for the region should be cooperatively managed and conservation practices implemented to ensure a safe and sufficient supply of water for the future. Growth management of the region should be well planned and coordinated with future utility extensions.

POLICIES

IN P1. **Regional transportation planning.** Roanoke will participate in regional transportation planning through the MPO to appropriately develop regional plans that support compact urban development, discourage sprawl, and emphasize multi-modal forms of transportation that prioritize facilities for bicycles, pedestrians, rail, and transit as well as accommodate automobiles. Cooperative planning on the local, regional, and state levels should include design features that maintain or improve connectivity of streets while maintaining neighborhood integrity and minimizing negative visual and noise impacts.

IN P2. **Transportation system.** Roanoke will provide a transportation system that is an integrated, multi-modal network of automobile, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities. Interconnected street systems should be encouraged in new development and be maintained in existing development. New roadways through existing urban areas should be designed to minimize impact on the City's urban fabric and complement Roanoke's neighborhoods.

IN P3. **Land use and transportation plans.** Transportation and land use planning will be integrated to promote compact urban development and reduce the frequency and length of automobile trips. Bicycle facilities and pedestrian improvements will be a fundamental part of land use and transportation planning. Future commercial development along arterial roads will be focused at major intersections rather than strip commercial development along corridors.

IN P4. **Parking.** Roanoke will encourage on-street parking wherever possible and discourage excessive surface parking lots. Maximum parking standards for development outside of downtown will be established. Off-street parking will be encouraged to the side or rear of buildings. Carpooling, park-&-ride lots, and transit will be encouraged to reduce parking demand. The City will continue to maintain structure parking downtown.

IN P5. **Airport.** The City will participate in the Roanoke Regional Airport Commission to support continuous improvement in air service and passenger and freight facilities in order to maintain its position as the region's major airport. Land use adjacent to the airport should be reserved for commercial and industrial development related to air transportation or those businesses needing easy access to airport facilities. Airport-related uses will be encouraged in the areas near the airport. Residential land uses will be discouraged in the areas where noise exceeds recommended land use standards.

IN P6. **Technology environment and infrastructure.** Roanoke will create an environment for electronic government and technology businesses through planning, development of favorable policies, and incentives for technology infrastructure. Roanoke will facilitate development of the capacity and coverage of fiber-optic, cable, and wireless communication networks. The visual impact of telecommunication facilities will be minimized by co-location and placement of towers in strategic locations.

IN P7. **Water and sewer systems.** Roanoke's water and sewer systems will be maintained, upgraded, and extended to meet public needs in accordance with an adopted plan for utility improvements. Regional cooperation and agreements will be encouraged to provide the most efficient and effective utility services to citizens of Roanoke and the region. Conservation practices will be promoted and implemented. Roanoke will examine the potential for a regional storm water utility system where needed.

ACTIONS

Road System

IN A1. Adopt standard design principles for streets and develop a manual to guide construction that affects the streetscape and includes attractive designs for traffic calming devices.

IN A2. Develop an inventory of City streets based on transportation corridor classifications and identify priorities for design improvements.

IN A3. Develop a transportation plan as a component of Vision 2001-2020 that uses the recommended design principles to implement and prioritize street improvements. Identify priorities for streetscape improvements through neighborhood plans and through a street design inventory.

IN A4. Expand the urban forestry program to increase the number of street trees planted and replaced.

IN A5. Change zoning, subdivision, and other development ordinances to include revised street design principles.

IN A6. Coordinate with state and regional transportation agencies to include revised design standards for new and existing public roadways. Pursue public transportation links between the New River Valley and Roanoke.

Pedestrian, Greenway, and Bicycle Systems

IN A7. Develop a greenway system to provide pedestrian and bicycle linkages between the region's parks, rivers, creeks, natural areas, recreation areas, business centers, schools, and other institutions.

IN A8. Identify long-term funding for sidewalk construction.

IN A9. Develop procedures that link or expand greenways when obtaining rights-of-way when developing utilities.

IN A10. Develop and adopt a bicycle and pedestrian transportation plan that uses the recommended design principles.

Transit System

IN A11. Develop programs to increase the ridership of Valley Metro.

IN A12. Encourage employers to establish motor pools for work-related trips during the day so employees can walk or bike to work.

IN A13. Continue programs that provide public transportation to disabled citizens; consider expansion of service to employment and medical centers.

IN A14. Explore streetcars or other mass transit systems.

Airport

IN A15. Encourage expanded direct air service to major national destinations.

IN A16. Provide accessible shuttle service between the airport and other local destinations.

Rail System

IN A17. Encourage expansion of rail service to relieve truck congestion on Interstate 81.

IN A18. Explore development of a regional facility for a truck-to-rail intermodal transfer facility and inland port.

IN A19. Pursue passenger rail service.

Technology Infrastructure

IN A20. Create a task force responsible for developing a technology strategy.

IN A21. Inventory and map technology resources such as available buildings, communications infrastructure, and existing technology businesses.

IN A22. Foster strong partnerships and cooperative projects with Virginia Tech and other local universities.

Water and Wastewater

IN A23. Promote regional solutions to public water and sewer needs and services, including consideration of water conservation strategies.

IN A24. Maintain and upgrade sanitary sewer lines to eliminate infiltration and inflow of storm water.

3.5 PUBLIC SERVICES: POLICE, FIRE/EMS, SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT, CODE ENFORCEMENT

BACKGROUND

Public Safety

The Police Department operates out of centralized offices in the Municipal Building Annex in downtown Roanoke. The Department has approximately 250 budgeted positions for sworn personnel. Due to numerous vacancies in police personnel, additional emphasis has been placed on recruitment, improving benefits, and retention of existing officers. Police operations patrol 13 districts that are covered by 14 to 18 police cars 24 hours a day. A new police building is under construction and will relieve overcrowded conditions and provide additional space for new operations. Roanoke became one of only two localities in Virginia to be awarded the status of Certified Crime Prevention Community. The designation came out of a new program developed by the state Department of Criminal Justice Services.

The Police Department has adopted community oriented policing as a standard method of operation. This approach includes the Community Oriented Policing Effort (COPE) unit, a special police team that moves to specific sites to address particular problems. The COPE team works cooperatively with other departments to solve problems and can work from satellite offices in the community. Currently, COPE teams work from satellite sites located on Williamson Road and Lafayette Boulevard.

The Department has made a significant investment in time and financial resources in the Record Management System, which is a computerized system that enhances officers' ability to transmit and share information electronically. Mobile Data Terminals in vehicles are used to reduce paperwork, improve timeliness and accuracy of information, and reduce response time.

The Department is accredited by the Commission for Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). CALEA accreditation requires police departments to work regionally to achieve goals set out in standards. This cross-jurisdictional cooperation greatly enhances the ability of departments to respond to problems and provides training and education opportunities for personnel.

3.5.1 Public Facilities

- Police Offices
- Fire/EMS stations
- Public Facility

The Roanoke Fire-EMS (Emergency Medical Services) Department has central offices located in the Jefferson Center building at 541 Luck Avenue, S.W. The Department employs approximately 275 personnel. The Department is a full-service fire and emergency medical service agency providing basic and advanced pre-hospital life support, fire prevention, educational programs, fire suppression services, and arson detection. It also provides vehicle extrication and tactical heavy rescue, and supports a regional hazardous materials team.

Roanoke Fire-EMS operates 14 fire-EMS stations throughout the City with 13 fire engines, four aerial ladder trucks, two water tankers, five ambulances, three command vehicles, and airport firefighting equipment. Each year the department responds to approximately 2,500 fires or first responder calls, of which 240 (on average) are fires. In contrast, 15,500 EMS calls are answered each year, which involve approximately 10,000 ambulance transports to local hospitals.

Improvements to equipment and training methodologies have improved both the overall response time and effectiveness of the force. More than 92% of the Department's personnel are cross-trained to perform both firefighting and emergency medical tasks, greatly increasing the Department's overall effectiveness.

Zoning, Building, and Development

The City has adopted various ordinances that regulate new development and the rehabilitation of existing structures. These include the Zoning Ordinance, Uniform Statewide Building Code, Property Maintenance Code, and Subdivision Ordinance, as well as ordinances for erosion and sediment control and storm water management. Various designated agents and Council-appointed Boards provide administration, enforcement, and appeals of these regulations.

Solid Waste Management

The City disposes of solid waste at the Smith Gap Regional Landfill (established in 1993), which is accessed from a regional transfer station operated by the Roanoke Valley Resource Authority. Solid waste is collected on a weekly basis from its residential customers and on a bi-weekly basis for commercial customers. Recycling is provided citywide and includes composting of brush and yard wastes.

POLICY APPROACH

Public Safety

Studies indicate that the perception of a safe environment is one of the critical factors to a city's success in attracting residents, visitors, and businesses. Roanoke's Police Department is developing an effective and responsive approach to law enforcement that actively involves community policing in developing anti-crime initiatives. The development of satellite offices is an opportunity for officers to work in the community with residents and businesses, as well as other City departments and agencies, to resolve problems and bring resources to the community to address many of the root causes of crime. Roanoke should strengthen career development programs for experienced police officers to stay on active duty patrolling and provide officers with updated equipment based on changes in technology.

The Fire-EMS (Emergency Medical Services) Department is reviewing facility requirements. Further study and planning are needed to investigate the costs and benefits of closing some of the existing facilities and the reassignment of equipment and personnel. Renovated facilities could continue to serve the community as offices or locations for community-based services. Some inter-jurisdictional agreements have been established, but closer coordination should be encouraged between Roanoke and neighboring localities to coordinate fire and emergency services in urbanized areas of the Roanoke Valley.

Zoning and Development Code Administration

Citizens place a strong emphasis on neighborhoods as being an "essential element in Roanoke's quality of life" and as such, the "character and environmental quality" of neighborhoods should be protected. These publicly-identified and important community values focus on the need for better public and private property maintenance through public policy, including stronger controls over unsightly properties and the strengthening of housing maintenance and zoning regulations to ensure improved development quality and community appearance.

As Roanoke positions itself to attract new housing and business, the development process should be streamlined and flexible in order to meet development needs while protecting the public welfare and safety. This process should emphasize excellence in customer service.

Solid Waste Management

Recycling and resource recovery programs are progressive, long-range approaches to managing Roanoke's solid waste and increasing the life of the Smith Gap Landfill. Roanoke should evaluate and implement additional programs that encourage cost-effective methods of recycling. Composting should be considered as a method to increase the life of the landfill.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

Multi-Service Facilities: Providing needed public services in accessible locations in the community is important to improving customer service and working relationships with neighborhoods and businesses. Community multi-service facilities are proposed as neighborhood-based service centers to provide easy access to City services, community education programs, and other community not-for-profit agencies, acting as an information and referral outreach service. Specific programs that could be located in multi-service centers include Code Compliance, Recreation Facilitators, Human Service Department intake counselors, Treasurer's Department, Health Department programs, and COPE officers. Other activities may include after-school programs, adult education, computer centers for Internet access, general health clinics, senior citizen services, and employment centers. The facilities should augment existing services by operating as branch offices with the range of services tailored to meet the needs of patrons.

City Services and Delivery

Improved communication and computer technology provide opportunities to re-examine how services are delivered. Satellite work sites at dispersed multi-service facilities could serve as information sites in neighborhoods for businesses and citizens to work with City staff, pay taxes, obtain vehicle decals, or for information and referrals for various programs and services. Code compliance activities should be coordinated among City department and state agencies.

POLICIES

PS P1. **Community policing.** Roanoke will continue its community policing approach to strengthen close interaction and mutual cooperation between police, residents, businesses, and community groups.

PS P2. **Public safety services.** Public safety services will maintain a high degree of excellence that meets or exceeds nationally-recognized accreditation standards.

PS P3. **Fire and EMS services.** All areas of the City will have fire and emergency services that are located to provide the most effective and equitable protection.

PS P4. **Code administration.** The City will continuously review development and building codes and their administration to ensure appropriate regulations and review processes that encourage quality development and protection of the public's health, welfare, and safety.

PS P5. **Recycling.** Recycling and resource recovery will be promoted as a regional solid waste management tool. Roanoke will be known as a city that recycles all recyclable material, where feasible.

ACTIONS

Public Safety

PS A1. Develop strategies that strengthen community-policing (i.e., COPE) efforts between the police department, residents, businesses, and community groups.

PS A2. Public safety agencies will maintain or exceed nationally-recognized standards such as the Commission for Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies .

PS A3. Revise zoning ordinance to integrate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design in the development review process.

PS A4. Promote citizen participation in public safety programs such as the Citizens Police Academy.

PS A5. Study and promote regional approaches to providing public safety services that ensure their location and operation provide the most equitable, effective, and efficient service to citizens.

Code Administration, Boards, and Commissions

PS A6. Revise zoning ordinance regarding nuisance offenses to provide for civil fines and on-site ticketing to increase compliance.

PS A7. Provide code enforcement information to residents and inspectors in satellite service centers.

PS A8. Provide ongoing training for boards and commissions related to zoning, property maintenance, and development codes through certified training programs.

PS A9. Revise zoning and other ordinances to address new development patterns and land uses.

PS A10. Coordinate regulations, where feasible, with neighboring jurisdictions for consistency.

PS A11. Increase the use of information technology to improve services.

Solid Waste Management

PS A12. Develop and expand recycling and educational programs that promote its use.

PS A13. Consider developing a staffed recycling center with a household hazardous waste component.

City Administration and Service Delivery

PS A14. Pursue innovative service-delivery strategies that improve customer service. Increase the use of computers and information technology to reduce reliance on paper and provide greater access and sharing of information.

PS A15. Ensure that all public schools and City-owned facilities are located, designed, and maintained to complement neighboring land uses.

PS A16. Pursue regional efforts for solid waste management and recycling.

PS A17. Consider development of community service centers to provide direct services and serve as information and referral centers.

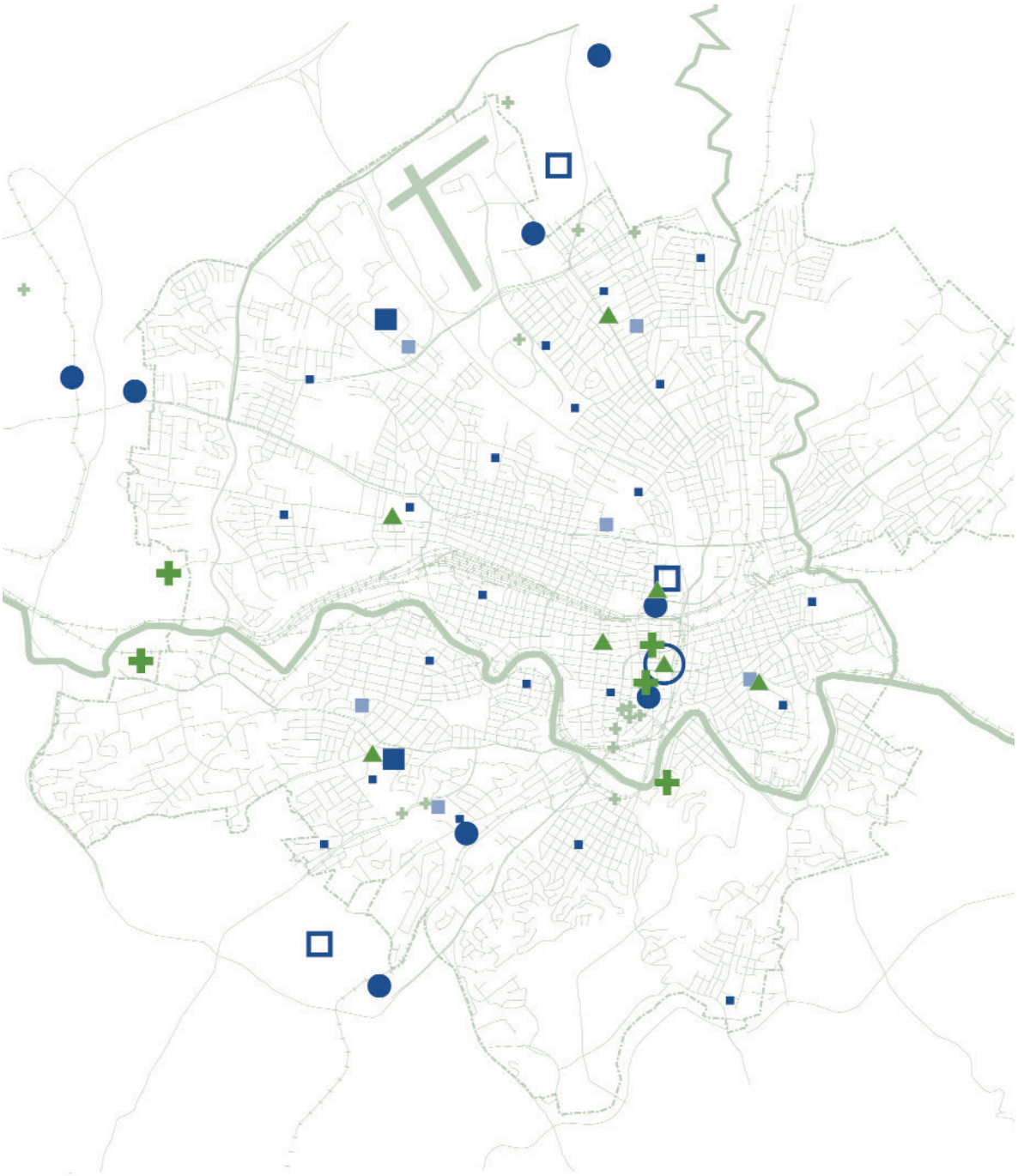
- Identify community service needs for two pilot locations (north and south) for centers.
- Develop an administrative plan that provides services and management of the centers.
- Involve private and non-profit sector organizations such as the Council of Community Services in planning for the facilities.

3.6 PEOPLE: EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, LIBRARIES

BACKGROUND

Public Schools

The Roanoke Public School System consists of 2 high schools, 6 middle schools, 21 elementary schools, and 2 alternative schools (see map 3.6.1). The schools offer a number of special programs, including the Magnet School program, CITY School, the Noel C. Taylor Learning Academy, and the Blue Ridge Technical Academy. Enrollment in 2000 totaled 13,867 students.



3.6.1 People and Human Development

- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School
- Private School
- College/Higher Education
- Hospital
- Medical Clinic
- Library

Renovations
Roanoke has completed major renovations of seven elementary schools and four middle schools, and has made substantial improvements to six elementary schools. A new school will be constructed in the Melrose Rugby neighborhood to replace the existing school. Studies are underway for improvements to both of the City's high schools.

Magnet Schools
The Magnet School program was initiated in 1988. It is the largest magnet program in Virginia and has programs in 13 schools for students in grades K-12. Magnet Schools feature special programs and resources that draw students from around the region. Each Magnet School develops programs ranging from dance, computers, and aviation to piano, architecture, languages, and the prestigious International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. Roanoke's newest Magnet School, Round Hill Montessori School, offers the first public Montessori program in this part of the state.

After-school programs
Roanoke schools have an extensive after-school activity program offering a mix of academics, cultural enrichment, community service activities, and sports. A third of the City's high school students and more than half of the middle school students participate in these programs. Nearly 800 middle and high school students are participating in a dozen tutorial programs, which are designed to improve grades, boost SOL test scores, and reduce dropout rates.

Governor's School of Science and Technology
The City of Roanoke is home to the Roanoke Valley Governor's School for Science and Technology, which serves students from regional high schools. Bedford, Craig, Franklin, and Roanoke Counties and the Cities of Roanoke and Salem participate in the program. The Governor's School is located on the Patrick Henry High School campus in southwest Roanoke.

Libraries
The City library system includes a downtown main library, five branch libraries (see map 3.6.1), and a bookmobile. A consortium has been formed with the library systems of Roanoke and Botetourt Counties and Salem City to operate an integrated automated library system. The consortium provides greater flexibility for patrons to take advantage of the collections and services located at any of the partner facilities. The main library houses the Virginia Room, a nationally-renowned collection of genealogy and history resources. The library is in the process of assessing whether the main library should be relocated to a larger, more central site that would provide greater flexibility for expanded services and improved parking.

Higher Education Center
Roanoke has expanded educational and training opportunities for adults in the region. The opening of the Roanoke Higher Education Center fulfilled a ten-year effort by local businesses and education leaders to expand post-secondary education opportunities. Virginia Tech, University of Virginia, and 17 other educational institutions offer graduate and undergraduate degree programs. Virginia Western Community College offers a wide range of programs leading to Associate Degrees or technical certifications.

Regional Colleges
Four colleges and universities are located within close proximity of Roanoke: Hollins University, Roanoke College, Virginia Tech, and Radford University. Partnerships with these colleges and universities are increasing, especially with respect to student internships, special projects, and technical assistance on governmental and environmental issues.

Virginia Western Community College
Virginia Western Community College's Workforce Development Services provides continuing education, up-to-date training information, resources, and support services to existing and potential business, industry, government, and the community.

Fifth District Employment and Training Consortium
Fifth District Employment and Training Consortium (FDETC) serves the Cities of Roanoke, Clifton Forge, Covington, and Salem and the Counties of Roanoke, Alleghany, Botetourt, and Craig. The FDETC assists employers and job seekers by assessing employer needs as well as job-seeker skills and abilities; developing customized service strategies; and providing employment counseling, education, and specific occupational skills training. The FDETC receives its primary funding from the resources of the federal Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), through the Governor's Employment and Training Department. Locally, the FDETC receives its policy guidance and oversight through the partnership of the Policy Board and Private Industry Council.

Health and Human Services
City of Roanoke: The Medical Center of Southwestern Virginia
Roanoke is the medical center for southwestern Virginia providing significant medical services and employment for the region. Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital and Carilion Community Hospital have undergone major renovations and restructuring during the past few years. Carilion Health System is the region's largest employer and includes both Roanoke Memorial and Community Hospitals.

Public Mental Health Services
Public mental health services are provided by Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare of the Roanoke Valley, which offers programs for mental health, retardation, illness, and substance abuse. City of Roanoke Health Department provides a range of health and mental health programs. The Health Department also provides environmental health services, communicable disease programs, and programs for children and families.

Social Services
Roanoke's Department of Social Services provides assistance in three areas: protective services, support services, and temporary financial assistance programs. Most recipients are experiencing a financial or medical crisis, unexpected unemployment, natural disaster or fire, family violence, hardship caring for aging parents, or a life-altering disability. These programs directly impact and enhance a citizen's ability to obtain and maintain self-sufficiency, care for dependent family members, and experience a safe and satisfying quality of life. The City is reimbursed from state and federal sources for approximately 87% of these services. The department also serves citizens interested in becoming foster parents, providing day-care services, or adopting a child.

POLICY APPROACH

Education and Lifelong Learning

The perceived quality of a school education is strongly linked to the City's long-range revitalization goals. The perceived negative image of City schools has been one of the major stumbling blocks in attracting and retaining young families in City neighborhoods. Continued efforts are needed to improve the image of the schools and to promote the wide range of quality educational opportunities available through the City of Roanoke Public Schools.

Children are encouraged to actively take advantage of Roanoke's existing excellent resources to receive a well-rounded education that prepares them for ongoing study or to enter the workforce. National studies indicate that successful after-school programs create a positive learning environment and actively engage students. These programs should be expanded into community learning centers that are available to students, parents, and the community in all areas of the City – possibly as part of larger dispersed multi-service facilities.

Workforce development is an important element of Roanoke's overall economic development strategy. Continuing education opportunities, as well as job training and lifelong learning, are important components of supporting a learning environment. The Roanoke Higher Education Center is poised to expand the current range of degree and non-degree programs to provide even greater opportunities for residents to pursue career interests.

Libraries

The future for a strong library system must include broadening the vision of what a library provides. In a celebration of Library Week 2001, First Lady Laura Bush called libraries "Palaces of People." She said that libraries are more than warehouses for books; they are gathering places, literally community centers. At the same time, as Roanoke plans for the future, libraries must become vital resources for lifelong learning.

Health and Human Services

A healthy city is one that is continually creating and improving those physical and social environments, and expanding those community resources that enable people to support each other in performing all functions of life and in developing themselves to their maximum potential. A healthy community is built on a foundation of multiple assets: economic, social, environmental, and human. To achieve the goal of being a healthy community, the City should adopt principles of sustainability that guide policymaking and enhance and sustain a high quality of life.

POLICIES

Education and Lifelong Learning

PE P1. **Quality education.** Roanoke's school system will be known for its quality education that prepares students for the workplace or with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in higher education. Roanoke will maintain and improve its high-quality public education facilities and programs at all levels.

PE P2. **School facilities.** School facilities are important community facilities. The location of new school facilities will be carefully planned to enhance the surrounding community and adhere to the City Design principles recommended.

PE P3. **Lifelong learning.** Roanoke will support schools, libraries, continuing and higher education programs, community-based education, and recreation programs that foster a positive learning environment for persons of all ages.

PE P4. **Community learning centers.** Roanoke will encourage the efficient use of public schools by co-location of education, lifelong learning, and recreation programs in school facilities, making them community learning centers.

PE P5. **After-school and evening programs.** Roanoke will encourage parents to participate with students in innovative school programs beyond the school curriculum during after-school, evenings, and weekends.

PE P6. **Workforce development.** Roanoke will strive to provide the necessary education and training for a well-qualified workforce to meet the demands of business and industry. Accordingly, Roanoke will support Roanoke City Schools, the Roanoke Higher Education Center, Workforce Development Services at Virginia Western Community College, Fifth District Employment and Training Consortium, and other regional facilities.

Libraries

PE P7. **Libraries.** Roanoke will support its libraries as a fundamental part of its lifelong learning system. They will function as informational and social centers that provide places for community gathering, business research, and educational activities. The library will establish strong links with schools and higher-education facilities.

Health and Human Services

PE P8. **Health care programs.** Roanoke will support health care programs that encourage healthier living to improve community health.

PE P9. **Health and human service agencies.** Roanoke will support a range of health and human services to meet the needs of Roanoke's citizens.

PE P10. **Local and regional collaboration.** Roanoke will support efforts for local and regional collaboration and cost-sharing measures to assist health and human service agencies.

ACTIONS

Education and Lifelong Learning

PE A1. Develop and expand strategies that encourage parents and children to make the commitment for children to attend and participate in school every day.

PE A2. Create programs that provide opportunities for education and coaching in local institutions such as churches, neighborhood groups, and businesses to increase awareness and value of education.

PE A3. Develop plans for constructive alternatives for students in in-school suspension.

PE A4. Create ways to encourage churches and civic groups to adopt a school and provide programs/activities to build youth interest and provide role models for success.

Libraries

PE A5. Improve the downtown main library to provide greater accessibility, better service delivery, and access to technology. Consider building improvements, a new building, or relocation of the library.

PE A6. Continue to support the Virginia Room as the premier resource center for genealogy and history.

PE A7. Explore inclusion of business development services at the main library.

PE A8. Develop a plan that identifies branch library facilities that have become outdated or cannot be expanded; consider relocation to sites that have facilities to provide access to bus service and provide adequate and safe parking.

Health and Human Services

PE A9. Promote programs that educate citizens regarding public and private programs to make health care more accessible.

PE A10. Develop a strategy that addresses duplication of inter-related services in health and human service programs.

PE A11. Promote health care programs related to pre-natal care, immunization, dental and vision care, and health screening by using the Internet, television, and other forms of media.

PE A12. Inventory existing day care facilities; develop a plan aimed at increasing the availability of affordable day and evening care for children, elderly, and the handicapped.

PE A13. Develop special needs programs that are accessible and connected to housing and support networks.

PE A14. Provide accessible information in satellite service facilities.

PE A15. Promote development of a regional cost-sharing program for health and human services.

PE A16. Establish new regional public transportation routes in the Valley to provide better access to health care and support services.

PE A17. Develop strategies that support greater use of recreational and exercise programs in schools, parks, and greenways.

ROANOKE VISION COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 1985-2005

Roanoke Vision provided the City of Roanoke with a new approach to future development, revitalization, and growth. The plan recommended that Roanoke should be a city of neighborhoods. Preservation and enhancement of the city's existing neighborhood fabric – attractive homes, tree-lined streets, neighborhood commercial districts, and local employment sites – were established as key components for success in the future. The plan was recognized nationally for its grass roots citizen participation effort and for its inclusion of historic preservation principles for revitalization. The plan and the public process won a National Planning Award from the American Planning Association in 1987. Roanoke also received an All America City Award for this project.

CHAPTER

FOUR

CITY DESIGN: THE PLAN'S UNIFYING THEME

vision 2001 2020

The overall goal of Vision 2001-2020 is to make Roanoke an attractive place for people of all ages, backgrounds, and income levels to live, work, shop, and play. This vision requires not only sound social and economic policies but also a strong commitment to excellence in community design and appearance. Simply put, Roanoke must be a beautiful city.

Good design is not optional. The quality of the physical environment – attractive streets, buildings, parks, and open space – has a direct impact on Roanoke's economy, the sustainability of its neighborhoods, and the successful stewardship of its unique natural and cultural resources. The community expects the highest level of excellence in building design, streetscapes, pedestrian amenities, preservation of special places, and enhancement of community distinctiveness.

4.1 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The City Design element of Vision 2001-2020 seeks to achieve this goal by establishing general design principles to guide future infill, new development, street improvements, and redevelopment of underused sites. City Design recognizes that Roanoke is not uniform in design; rather, the City is comprised of distinct character districts, each with its own set of place-defining characteristics. Design principles associated with each character district are intended to guide future land use and zoning and provide landowners and developers with ideas regarding site development and building decisions.

Region

The City of Roanoke serves as the economic and cultural hub of the largest metropolitan center in southwest Virginia, the Roanoke Valley. The City's image goes beyond its political boundaries; visitors, newcomers, and businesses form their impressions of Roanoke at a regional level. Therefore, it is important to reach across political boundaries to promote sensible development, attractive transportation networks, and good design throughout the Roanoke Valley.

Design principles

- Roanoke should cooperate with its neighbors to protect the scenic beauty of the Roanoke Valley by limiting ridgetop development, preserving important viewsheds, and protecting natural waterways.

- Roanoke should cooperate with its neighbors to mitigate the effects of population growth by supporting cluster development, the preservation of open space, and the development of a multi-modal transportation network throughout the Roanoke Valley.

- Major transportation routes within the Roanoke Valley should be attractively landscaped and designed to minimize disturbance of the natural environment. Gateways and appropriate signage should welcome visitors and newcomers to the Valley.

- Landmarks, parkways, environmental, historic, and cultural tourism attractions should be protected from visual or physical encroachment by incompatible uses.

City

The City of Roanoke owes its distinctiveness to its compact urban form. Intense development is concentrated around Roanoke's downtown and large regional shopping centers, with

density of development generally decreasing as it radiates from the city center. Visual impressions of Roanoke are formed at key entrance points along major transportation routes, with Mill Mountain and the downtown skyline serving as the City's predominant visual landmarks.

Design principles:

- Gateways should be established along major transportation routes leading into the City. Major transportation routes should be attractively landscaped and should include appropriate signage to direct visitors and promote Roanoke's unique attractions.
- Roanoke should have well-defined edges to support an understanding of the City's image and create a clear sense of arrival and departure.
- New development along the City's edges should promote a positive image of the City by respecting natural features, emphasizing high-quality building design, and incorporating appropriate landscaping.

Downtown

Downtown is characterized by a pronounced skyline, pedestrian-friendly streets and a mixture of retail, office, residential, and light industrial uses. Downtown is not confined to the Central Business District, but extends into the Belmont, Gainsboro, and Old Southwest neighborhoods. Downtown streets form an interconnected grid and are designed to accommodate both vehicular and pedestrian use. Buildings are typically set close to the street and often adjoin each other. Parking is generally concentrated in parking structures or is located to the side or rear of principal buildings.

Design principles:

- Downtown should have a recognizable skyline; tall buildings and maximum site development should be permitted. Buildings should be set close to the street with ground-floor facades that emphasize pedestrian activity.
- Buildings should be designed to accommodate a mixture of uses. Downtown's historic character should be preserved and used to guide new development with the assistance of the Architectural Review Board guidelines.
- Access to and circulation within the downtown should be efficient, convenient, and attractive. Streets should be designed to accommodate multiple modes of traffic: pedestrian, bicycles, transit, automobiles. Encourage two-way streets to the maximum extent feasible.
- On-street parking should be reserved for shoppers and short-term visitors. Long-term parking should be concentrated in parking structures or to the side or rear of principal buildings. Surface parking should be minimized.

Downtown neighborhoods
Downtown neighborhoods are characterized by small lots (approximately 5,000 square feet); two-story houses with porches; consistent building setbacks; and an interconnected grid of narrow, tree-lined streets and alleys. These neighborhoods developed adjacent to the downtown between the 1890s and 1920s.

Design principles:
- Houses should have front porches; setbacks for residential structures should be consistent.
- Recognized historic buildings should be preserved and should be used to guide new development.
- All streets should have sidewalks and should be lined with trees; on-street and rear-access parking should be encouraged.

Traditional neighborhoods
Traditional neighborhoods are characterized by medium-sized lots (5,000-7,000 square feet); one and a half- or two-story houses; consistent building setbacks; and an interconnected grid of narrow, tree-lined streets. These neighborhoods developed between the 1920s and 1940s as the streetcar system expanded outward. Traditional neighborhoods often feature churches, neighborhood schools, and small neighborhood commercial centers.

Design principles:
- All streets should have sidewalks and should be lined with trees. On-street parking should be encouraged; driveways and garages should be located to the side or rear of buildings.
- Neighborhood schools and commercial centers should be preserved.
- Houses should be consistent in terms of front yard setback and bulk.

Suburban neighborhoods
Suburban neighborhoods are characterized by large lots (greater than 7,000 square feet), a variety of housing sizes and styles, deep front yard setbacks, wide curvilinear streets, and prominent driveways and garages. These neighborhoods developed after World War II as dependency on the automobile increased.

Design principles:
- New residential development should incorporate traditional neighborhood principles rather than suburban patterns.
- Street improvements within suburban neighborhoods should focus on greater vehicular connection, pedestrian amenities, and reduction of pavement width.

Village centers
Roanoke's traditional neighborhoods typically featured small commercial centers that allowed residents to live, work, and shop in a local setting. Village centers are characterized by a

mixture of high-density uses, including neighborhood-oriented retail, office, and residential uses. Buildings are typically set close to the street and often adjoin each other; parking is located to the side or rear of principal buildings.

Design principles:

- Higher-density residential development should be concentrated within and immediately adjacent to village centers; housing density should decrease with distance away from the village center.
- Buildings should be set close to the street with ground-floor facades that emphasize pedestrian activity.
- Village centers should have broad sidewalks that provide strong pedestrian links into the surrounding neighborhood. Streets and streetscapes should promote pedestrian activity.
- Parking should be located on the street or to the rear or side of principal buildings, and on-street parking should be encouraged.

Local commercial centers

Local commercial centers are intended to serve multiple neighborhoods but generally do not draw customers from a citywide or regional base. These centers are typically located along arterial or collector streets and are characterized by large sites, linear development, deep setbacks, and large expanses of parking. Uses often include grocery stores, restaurants, and small retail shops.

Design principles:

- Local commercial centers should maximize site development through reduced parking spaces, increased lot coverage, and parcels developed along street frontages.
- Parking lots should have multiple vehicular entrances that are clearly marked and attractively landscaped. Parking lots should have trees located in the interior of the site and along street frontages.
- Visual clutter and excessive lighting should be discouraged. Signs should be consolidated and attractively designed.

Regional commercial centers

Regional commercial centers are intended to serve as retail centers that draw customers from the City and the region. These centers are typically located along arterial roads or interstate highways. They are characterized by large sites with deep setbacks and large expanses of parking. Land uses often include big-box retail stores, shopping malls, national chain restaurants, and entertainment attractions.

Design Principles:

- Regional commercial centers should maximize connectivity with existing collector and arterial streets. Traffic improvements should avoid impact on surrounding neighborhoods. Streets should encourage pedestrian traffic and bicycle lanes.
- Site development should be maximized through reduced parking spaces, increased lot coverage, and parcels developed along street frontages. Shared parking should be encouraged.
- Parking lots should have multiple vehicular entrances that are clearly marked and attractively landscaped. Parking lots should have trees located in the interior of the site and along street frontages.
- Visual clutter and excessive lighting should be discouraged. Signs should be clustered and attractively designed.

Commercial corridors

Commercial corridors are intended to serve as retail strips for customers from throughout the City and are generally located on arterial roads. They are characterized by linear development on wide roads without bicycle lanes or pedestrian traffic access with excessive signage and curb cuts. Land uses often consist of a variety of business supportive services such as banks, restaurants, furniture stores, and convenience stores, among others.

Design Principles:

- Commercial development should be concentrated at key intersections and should encourage higher-density, mixed-use development and live/work space along the road. Curb cuts should be minimized; shared parking lots and on-street parking should be encouraged.
- Site development should be maximized through reduced parking spaces, increased lot coverage, and parcels developed along street frontages.
- Visual clutter and excessive lighting should be discouraged. Signs should be attractively designed and co-located on single displays or monuments.

Industrial centers

Industrial centers are intended to serve as employment hubs that attract workers from the City and the region. These centers are typically located along arterial roads or interstate highways. They are characterized by large sites with perimeter fencing, outdoor storage, deep setbacks, and large expanses of parking. These centers sometimes have adjacent land uses that are incompatible and discourage expansion or redevelopment opportunities.

Design Principles:

- Outdoor storage should be shielded from public view, and perimeter fencing should be attractive.
- Site development should be maximized through reduced parking spaces, increased lot coverage, and parcels developed along street frontages. Shared parking should be encouraged.
- Parking lots should have multiple vehicular entrances that are clearly marked and attractively landscaped. Parking lots should have trees located in the interior of the site and along

street frontages. Connectivity within centers and with existing collector and arterial streets should be encouraged.

- Excessive lighting should be discouraged.

Industrial corridor

Industrial corridors are intended to serve as employment hubs for localities. These centers are typically located along areas that provide convenient transportation access (i.e., railroad, river, arterial road). They are characterized by large sites with deep setbacks, outdoor storage, perimeter fencing, large expanses of parking, and a principal entrance.

Design Principles:

- Outdoor storage should be shielded from public view, and perimeter fencing should be attractive.
- Site development should be maximized through reduced parking spaces, increased lot coverage, and parcels developed along street frontages. Bicycle lanes, pedestrian traffic, and shared parking should be encouraged.
- Parking lots should have multiple vehicular entrances and have trees located in the interior of the site and along street frontages. Connectivity within centers and with existing collector and arterial streets should be encouraged.
- Excessive lighting should be discouraged.

Streets

Street design principles address the design of new and existing streets and are intended to provide guidance for improvements. These principles are based on discussions of the case studies and research of street design practices. They address eight general elements of the streetscape: automobile accommodations, bicycle accommodations, pedestrian accommodations, transit accommodations, trees, signs, lighting, and buildings.

Design Principles:

Automobile

- Arterial road designs should encourage tree-lined urban boulevards with attractive pavement and efficient travel lanes.
- Pavement should be kept to the minimum width necessary.
- Narrow vehicle travel lanes should be used to discourage speeding.
- One-way streets should be converted to two-way streets, where possible, to improve access and promote safer speeds.
- On-street parking is desirable on most streets as it provides a buffer between pedestrians and automobile traffic, and it reduces the amount of scarce land dedicated to parking.
- Off-street parking should be located at the side or rear of buildings.
- Textured paving materials should be encouraged, where slower design speeds are desired.
- Access within and adjacent to industrial areas and key business sites should be encouraged.

Bicycles

- Bike lanes should be encouraged. Bike accommodations should be striped or colored lanes on urban collectors, minor arterials, and intermediate arterials.
- Major arterials should have off-road lanes or designated parallel routes.

Pedestrians

- Sidewalks should be provided on both sides of urban residential, urban collector, downtown, and arterial streets. Existing brick sidewalks should be preserved and maintained. Sidewalks should be separated from vehicle travel lanes by street trees and on-street parking.
- Curb return radii should be the minimum necessary as shorter radii reduce street crossing distances for pedestrians.
- Crosswalks in downtown and neighborhood commercial areas should be textured or of colored material.
- Wide streets with multiple lanes such as major arterials should have center medians that create a pedestrian refuge.

Transit

- Commercial centers and village centers should have bus shelters and benches (without advertising).
- Where warranted for safety, pullout areas for buses should be developed.

Trees, Signs, and Lighting

- Trees are an essential element of the streetscape and should be planted along all non-suburban streets. Wherever possible, trees should be planted so that they create a canopy over the roadway.

- Center medians planted with trees should be used on major arterials.
- Planting strips, the area between a curb and a sidewalk, should be used to accommodate street trees. They should be provided on all urban residential access streets, neighborhood collectors, and most arterials.
- Lighting should be decorative and pedestrian-scaled in downtown, commercial centers, and village centers.

- The negative appearance of overhead utility lines should be minimized through relocation to alleys or underground. Where relocation is not feasible, efforts should be made to consolidate lines onto fewer poles.

- Signs (private and public) should be limited in number and scaled in size to minimize visual clutter.

Buildings

- Building location and design should be considered as important elements of the streetscape and should be used to define the street corridor as a public place, especially at major intersections.

- Building height and location should create a feeling of enclosure along a street. Residential and commercial buildings should be located very close to streets with low vehicle speeds. Large public and institutional buildings should generally have deeper setbacks. Building setbacks should be consistent along the street.

- Building fronts and entrances should face a street.

- Major streets should terminate with monumental public/institutional buildings, parks, or civic art.

4.2 IMPLEMENTATION: A PROACTIVE DESIGN WORKSHOP

A design workshop was used to develop concepts and schematics to study alternative development patterns. A similar process is proposed to proactively reach consensus on future development decisions through participation involving stakeholders from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

Recommendation

- Develop procedures to institutionalize a design workshop aimed at reaching consensus on program and design approaches for proposed projects at the beginning of the development process rather than after extensive funds have been invested in preliminary or final design.

4.3 DESIGN ILLUSTRATIONS AND SCHEMATICS

Design illustrations were developed to study alternative development and design approaches for the following: Village Centers, Housing Clusters, Redeveloping Underutilized Commercial and Industrial Sites, Downtown Fringe Area, and Streetscapes and Transportation Corridors. The illustrations are schematics to illustrate concepts discussed during the planning process.

Please note that these illustrations are concepts and not public proposals. As such, they do not imply intent on the part of the City or other entity to purchase or develop any of the properties examined.

Village Centers

Many of Roanoke's traditional neighborhoods developed as "villages," with self-contained centers that provided opportunities for people to live, work, shop, play, and interact in a local

setting. Village centers offer amenities typically not found in suburban areas such as convenient access to schools, local shops, and places of employment. Village centers contain higher density residential, retail, entertainment venues, and office-space that contribute to the economic health of Roanoke. Two examples are illustrated: a small pedestrian-oriented, one block center and a larger automobile-oriented center consisting of two to three blocks.

Housing Clusters

Housing clusters are market-rate residential developments consisting of a mixture of residential uses (single-family, two-family, townhouses) on a large site, located within or adjacent to existing developments of established neighborhoods. Smaller than a traditional suburban subdivision but larger than a single lot infill home, housing clusters are partly defined by the ability and willingness of builders to acquire and package land in a developed, urban setting. Two examples are illustrated: Downtown, higher density infill location requiring a single city block site, and development of a traditional neighborhood design planned unit development on a single 50+ acre site.

Redeveloping Underutilized Commercial and Industrial Sites

Roanoke has a significant amount of commercial and industrially-zoned land that remains vacant or underutilized. These sites are often characterized by a single structure surrounded by large expanses of parking. Two examples are illustrated: Redevelopment of older shopping center with single, large footprint building and redevelopment of an underutilized industrial area with rail access and proximity to major thoroughfares.

Downtown Fringe Area

A prototype site was chosen in the northern portion of the South Jefferson Redevelopment Area (SJRA), known as the "Crossings." This area is located near the intersection of Williamson Road and Albemarle Avenue, just north of the first phase of the SJRA. The intent of the site investigation was to identify uses and improvements that could accelerate the redevelopment process.

This area is typical of other underutilized areas on the fringe of downtown located along rail or highway transportation corridors. Due to deterioration or vacancy, the area has an unattractive façade to passing residents or visitors that represents lost opportunities for job-

and revenue-producing uses. The current land use pattern in this area consists mainly of older industrial and commercial uses and vacant property. The properties are in the flood plain. Rail lines, roadways and the river make the site fragmented.

Streetscapes and Transportation Corridors
A design illustration was developed to show possible improvements to an existing four-lane roadway. Additional designs and road cross-sections will be developed as part of the Street Design Guidelines.

SMALL VILLAGE/NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

Function: The center serves the immediate neighborhood. It is located on a major thoroughfare. The center may contain neighborhood-serving commercial and office spaces such as a gas station/convenience store, small shops, and offices.

Scale: The village center is one block in length. Commercial and office uses are located on both sides of the street. The surrounding neighborhood is primarily two- to three-story residential single-family houses. Apartments will be located in converted older homes.

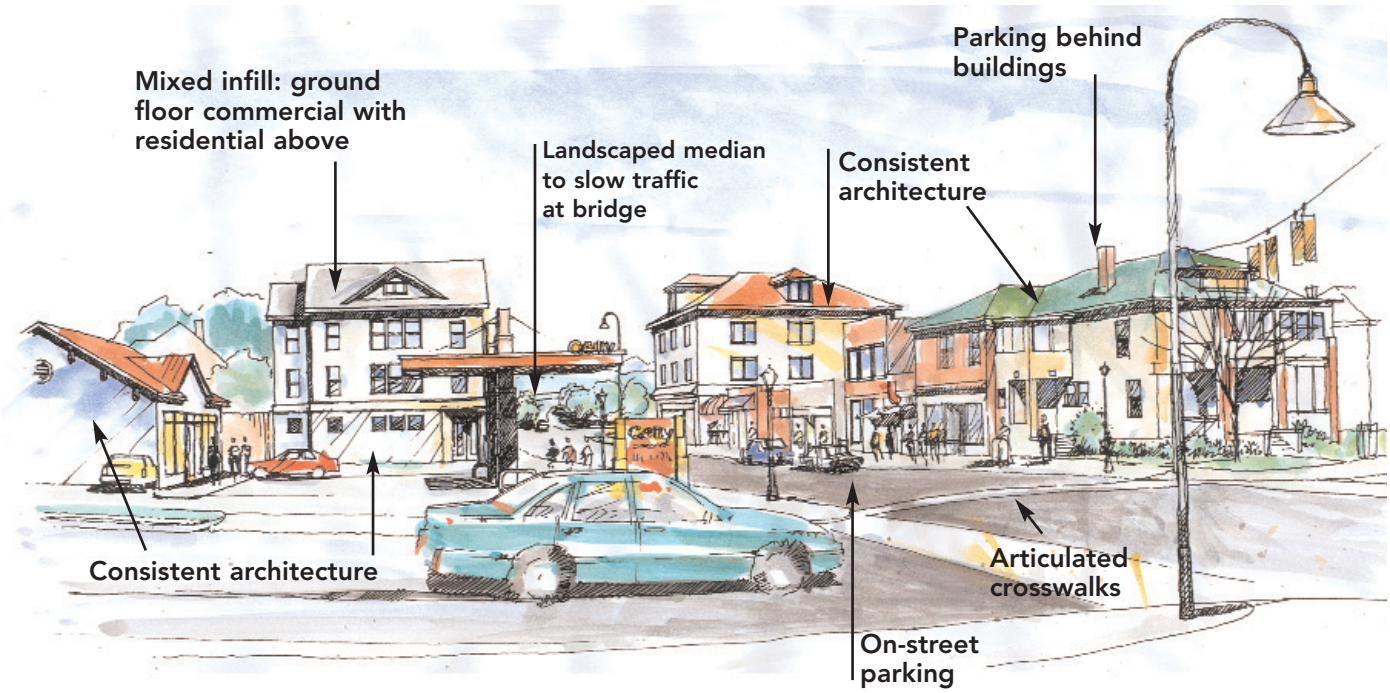
Design Schematic: Small Village/Neighborhood Center.
Land Uses: Existing buildings are renovated, and new mixed-use infill is added within the block to permit retail on the first floor with office and commercial uses on the second and third levels.

Traffic: On-street parking is added during off-peak hours. An articulated crosswalk in brick identifies the area as "pedestrian friendly" and is a reminder to motorists to slow their speed.

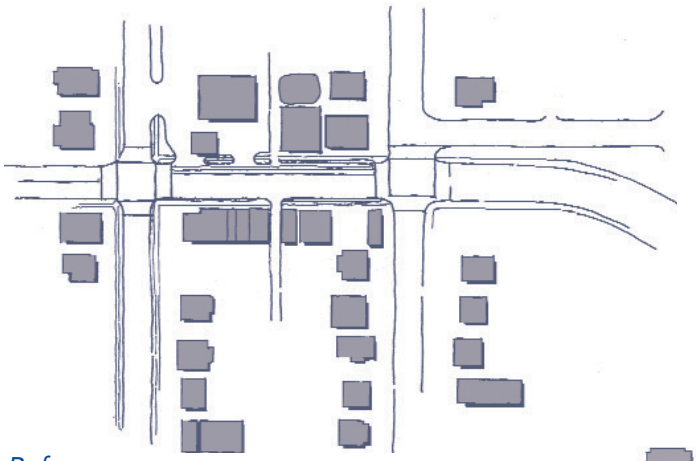
Parking: Off-street parking is added to the rear of the buildings. The parking is paved and well lighted. Retail stores have rear entrances to encourage patrons to utilize the parking lots.

Buildings: New buildings in the village center are not set back and must have 75% glass on the first floor to create visual attractiveness. Awnings, canopies, and other façade improvements are encouraged for existing buildings. Residential uses are permitted on the second floor of the commercial buildings.

Streetscape: An area identity is created by careful use of plant materials, lighting, street furniture, and signage.



Small Village/Neighborhood Center



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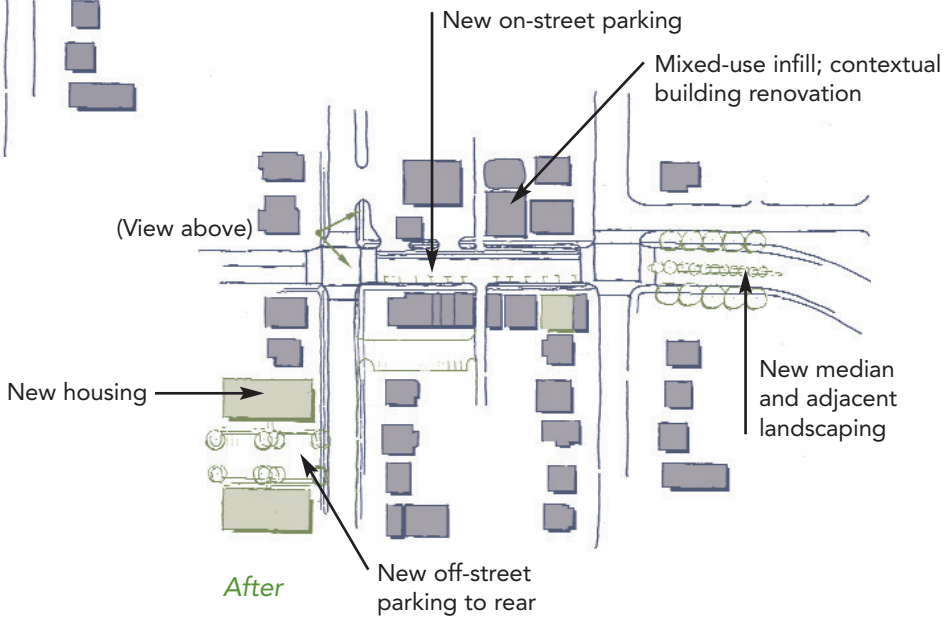

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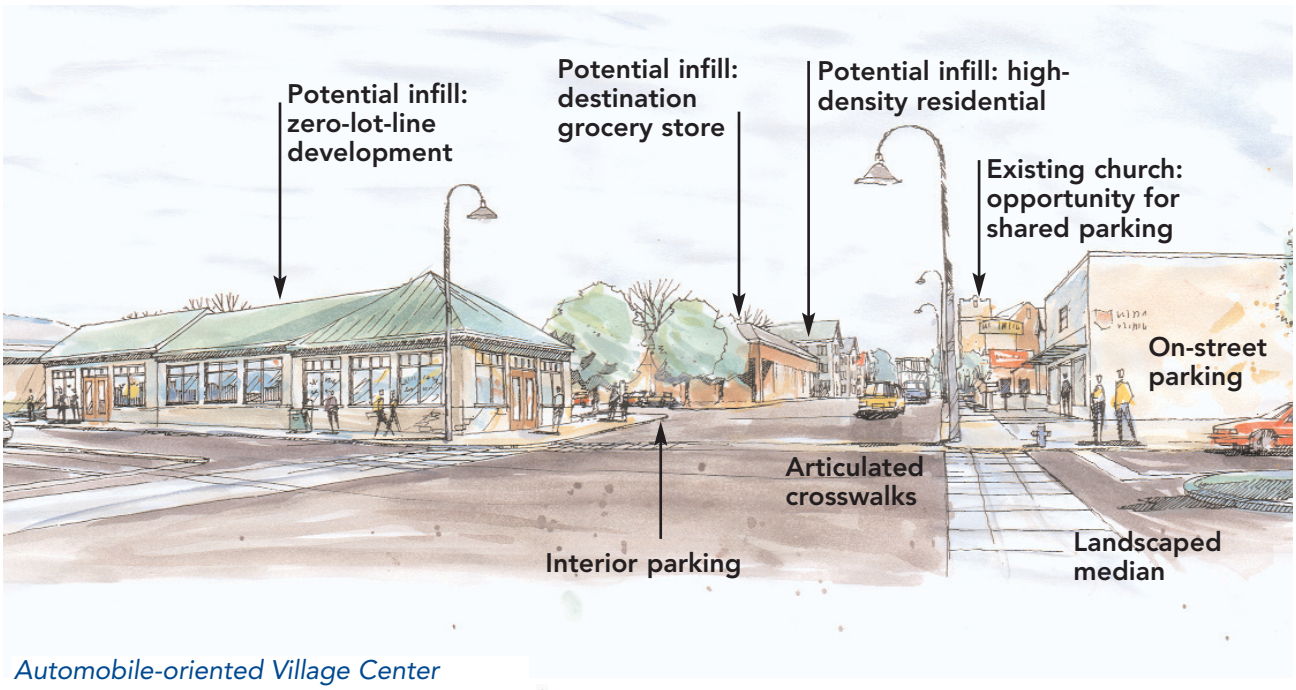
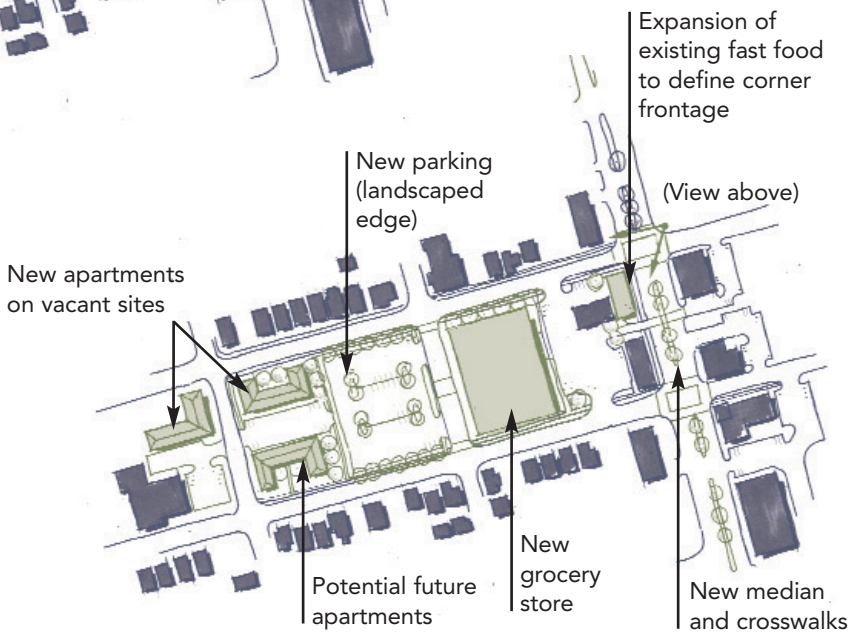


Automobile-oriented Village Center

Before



After

AUTOMOBILE-ORIENTED VILLAGE CENTER

Function: The center is located on a major corridor that carries local and commuter traffic. The center serves both the immediate neighborhood and surrounding community. The center may contain larger scale commercial uses such as a drug store, grocery store, or fast food restaurants. Institutional uses may include churches or other public buildings such as a firehouse or community center.

Scale: The center is two to three blocks in length and may include some uses on the first block of the side streets. The surrounding neighborhood is comprised of two- and two and a half-story residential buildings.

Design Schematic: Automobile-Oriented Village Center
Land Uses: Existing buildings are renovated, and new mixed-use infill is added within the block to permit retail and office uses. Residential uses at a higher density than the surrounding neighborhood (two- to three-story apartments) are suggested adjacent to the central commercial area. In this schematic, a grocery store that draws its market from outside the neighborhood is illustrated as a destination store that can support other merchants.

Traffic: On-street parking on arterial streets is not permitted. Articulated crosswalks in brick identify the area as "pedestrian friendly" and are a reminder to motorists to slow their speed in the commercial area.

Parking: Off-street parking is located on the side and at the rear of buildings shielded from the street by landscaping or low walls.

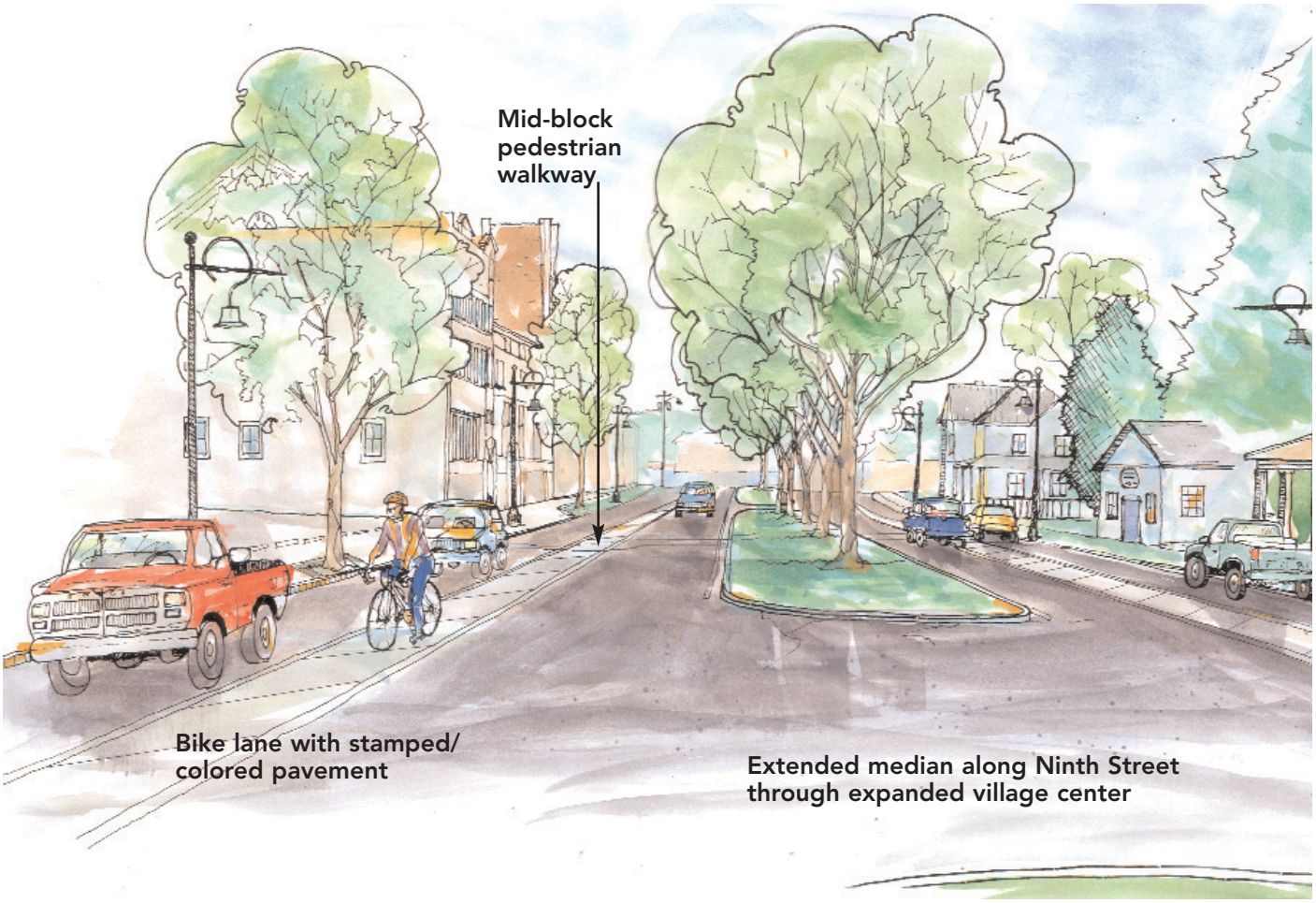
Buildings: New buildings are added to fill vacant spaces or expanses of surface parking. Buildings should not be set back and must have 60% glass on the first floor to create visual attractiveness. Awnings, canopies, and other façade improvements are encouraged for existing buildings.

Streetscape: An area identity is created by careful use of plant materials, lighting, street furniture, and signage.

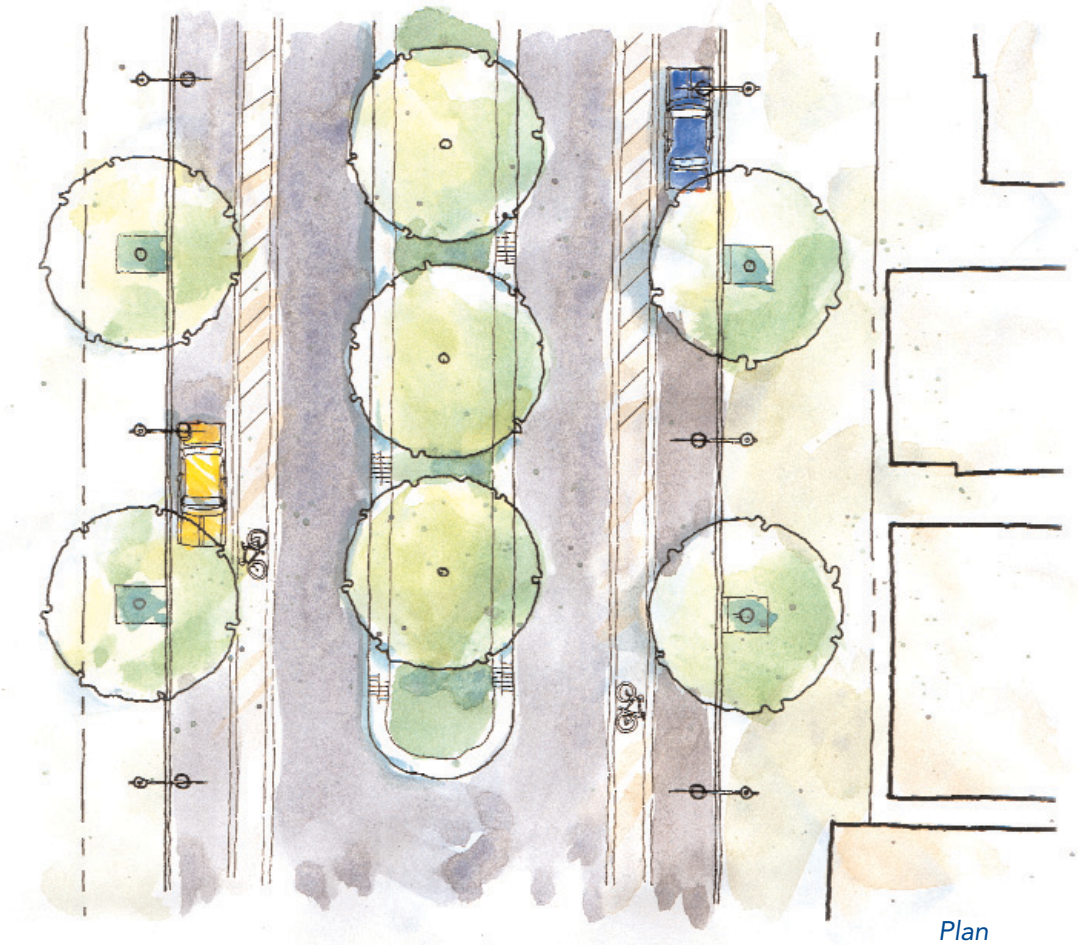
URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD COLLECTOR STREET

Design Schematic: The design schematic illustrates the reconfiguration of a typical four-lane collector street to an urban boulevard.

An extended median is constructed between cross streets. The median is of sufficient width to permit planting street trees. A sidewalk and parking lanes are added on each side of the street. A single travel lane allows the steady movement of vehicles. Parking can be limited during commuter hours if required. Stamped/colored pavement delineates bicycle lanes between each travel lane and the median. Mid-block crosswalks are articulated with brick or stamped pavement. Appropriate street lighting and signage complete the design.



Section



Plan

Urban Neighborhood Collector Street

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN: LARGE SITE

Function: The Traditional Neighborhood Design provides for a variety of single- and multi-family housing with supporting non-residential uses within a single planned development.

Scale: This design requires a large site (greater than 50 acres). The overall net density will range from 4 to 24 dwelling units per acre depending on the character of the community in which it is located; limits are set by the land use and location policies of the plan.

Design Schematic: Traditional Neighborhood Design
Land Uses: A mix of single family detached, duplex, single family attached, and multi-family dwelling units. Higher density residential development should be located adjacent to the village center including apartments above shops. Compatible governmental, religious, recreational, and other uses required to support the residents of the new and surrounding area are encouraged. Neighborhood service, commercial, retail, and office uses should be located in the village center.

Open space such as neighborhood and community parks, greenways, and trails should be developed. Greenways should be connected to the surrounding neighborhoods.

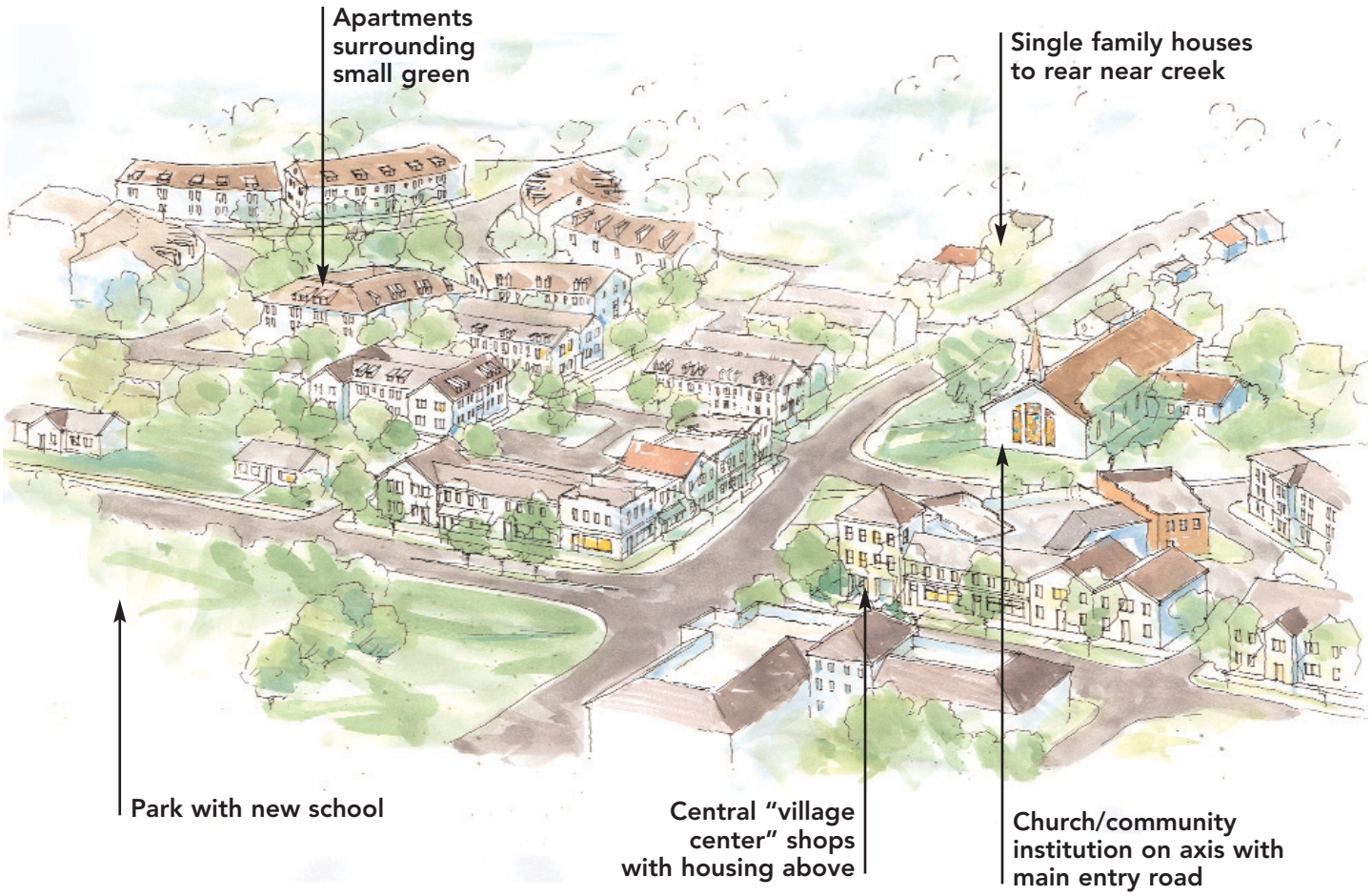
Roadways: Principal access points should be designed to encourage smooth traffic flow at a pedestrian-friendly speed. Where possible, neighborhood streets should connect with existing neighborhood streets to complete the street grid pattern of the surrounding area.

Parking: Parking in the village center should be located at the rear of the buildings or in a screened parking area.

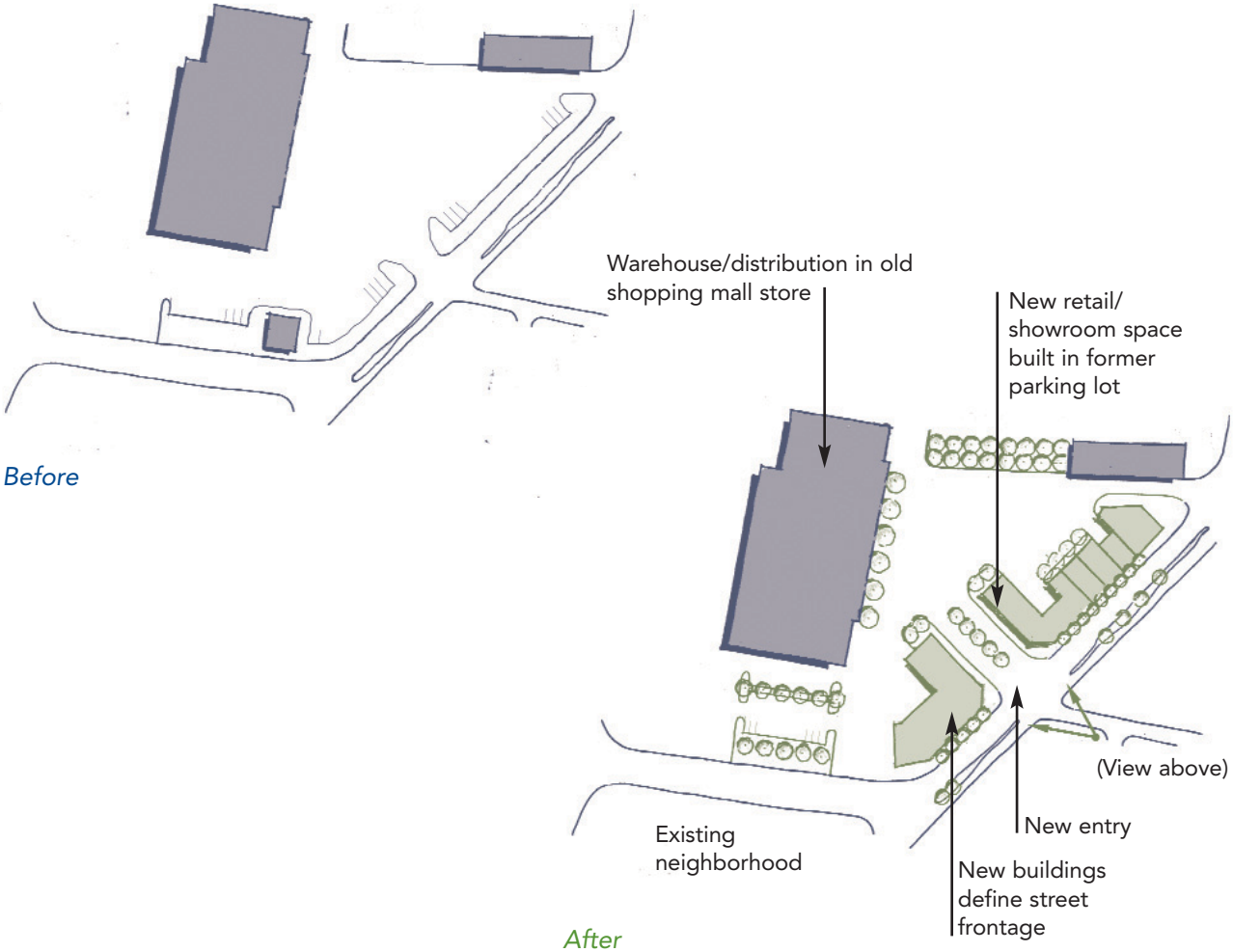
Streetscape: Higher density structures should be built to the building line with parking located in the rear or in parking areas. Single-family attached and detached structures should be built not more than 10 feet set back from the edge of the sidewalk, with parking located in the rear. Where possible, alleys should be created to serve rear access garages and parking areas.

An area identity is created by careful use of plant materials, lighting, street furniture, and signage.

Other features: Yards, fences, walls, or vegetative screening at the edge of the neighborhood should be provided to screen residential areas from undesirable views, lighting, noise, or other off-site impacts.



Traditional Neighborhood Design: Large Site



Before

After

REUSE OF OLDER COMMERCIAL CENTER

Function: Site is a 2- to 10-acre parcel zoned commercial, located on a major thoroughfare. Primary access will be from main road. The current use may be retail, or the site may be vacant.

Scale: Single large existing structure. Building may have been divided between tenants (grocery, drug store). Building is single footprint, with loading docks in the rear. Parking is located at the front of the building, with building set back from the road to the rear of the lot.

Design Schematic: Reuse of Older Commercial Center
Land Uses: Site is rezoned to permit mixture of commercial and light industrial uses such as distribution, warehousing, and retail space.

New infill buildings are added along street frontage to provide showroom, retail, and/or office space. Residential uses are not relevant in this example, although they could be considered as second-level space in other situations.

Traffic: Impact on surrounding neighborhood area is minimized by limiting access to the site from main roadways. Sidewalks are added along the main frontage of the site with articulated crosswalks in colored pavers at the entrance to the parking area.

Parking: Off-street parking is provided on site. Landscaping along building edges may be used to offset requirements for landscaping on paved parking area. Maximum parking requirements will reduce amount of parking; parking requirements will be calculated by use; shared on-site parking is permitted.

Buildings: New buildings along property line will be a minimum of two stories in height, will not be set back from front building line, and must have 50% glass on the first floor to create visual attractiveness. Awnings, canopies, and other façade improvements are encouraged on buildings along street frontage.

Streetscape: Landscaping along the street frontage will be limited to street trees planted in the planting strip along the road frontage.

REDEVELOPMENT OF UNDERUTILIZED INDUSTRIAL AREA

Function: The area is currently used for industrial purposes, located on a major arterial with easy access to I-81, I-581/Route 220, or major east/west corridors, although existing widths vary between two and four lanes creating bottlenecks. The industrial area was developed over the past 50 years, and many of the buildings are now vacant or underutilized. Residential areas or small lot commercial uses are often interspersed within the industrial areas limiting their functionality.

Scale: The area is linear, less than a mile in length. Adjacent uses outside of the corridor are single and multi-family residential and commercial services. Retail is frequently limited to convenience stores, gas stations, and auto-related uses.

Design Schematic: Redevelopment of Underutilized Industrial Area

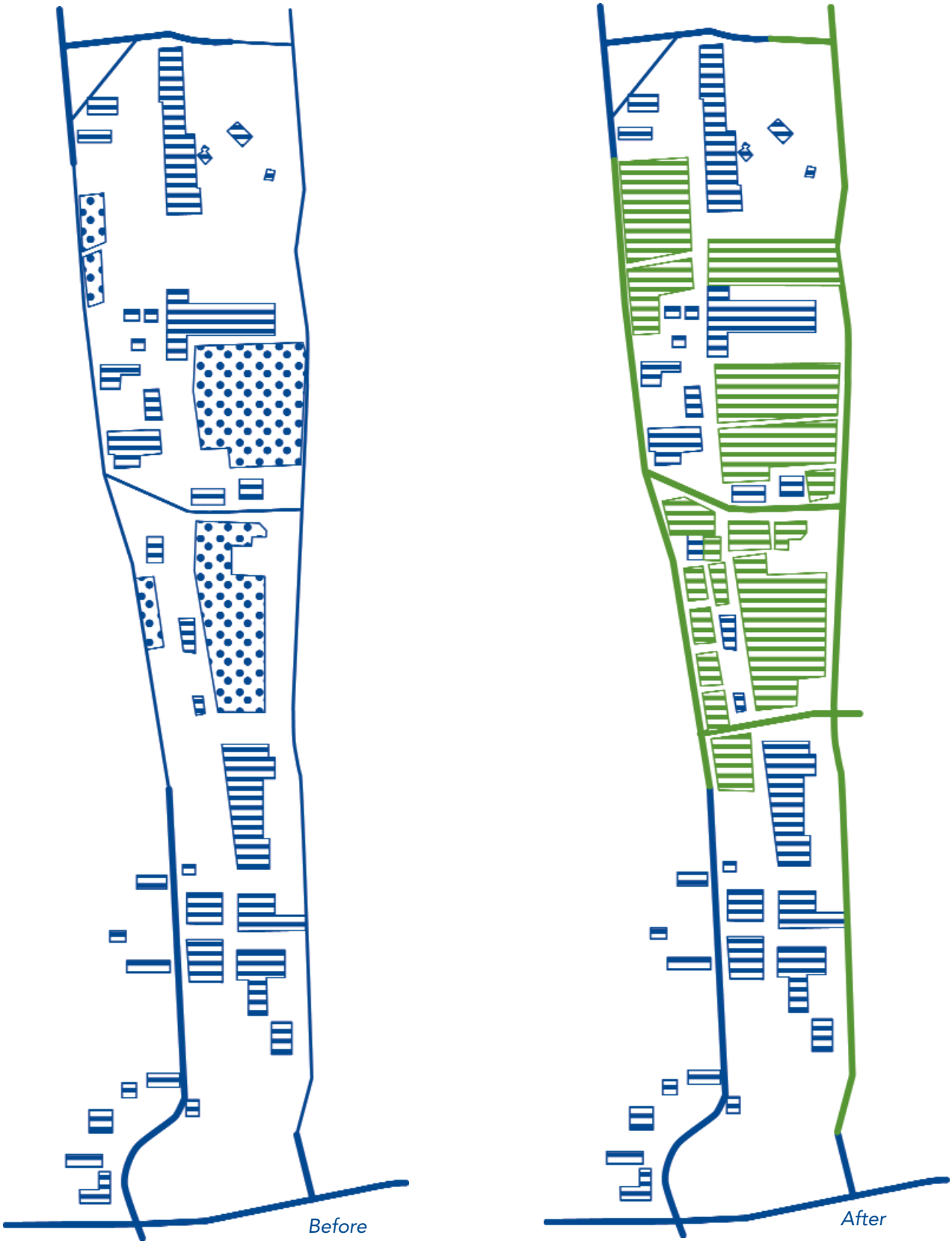
Land Uses: Existing industrial buildings and sites should continue to be used for heavy to light industry. Residential areas should be relocated over time, the land assembled and rezoned, and new industrial or research and development uses located in the area.

Traffic: Roadways should be improved to thoroughfares (four lane). Public transit service should be provided. New roads may need to be constructed or upgraded for intra-site access.

Parking: Parking is provided on site, buffered from surrounding neighborhood.

Buildings: New buildings will be developed to meet industrial, flex space, and research and development requirements and take advantage of rail opportunities where they exist.

Streetscape: Landscaping along main thoroughfares is required. Greenways and pedestrian linkages should be provided to connect the employment areas with residential or recreational areas.



Redevelopment of Underutilized Industrial Area

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT: NORTHERN PORTION OF THE SOUTH JEFFERSON REDEVELOPMENT AREA

The chosen prototype site was the northern portion of the South Jefferson Redevelopment Area (SJRA), known as the "Crossings." This area is located near the intersection of Williamson Road and Albemarle Avenue, just north of the first phase of the SJRA. The intent of the site investigation was to identify uses and improvements that could accelerate the redevelopment process.

Function: This area is typical of other underutilized areas on the southern edge of downtown located along rail or highway transportation corridors. Due to deterioration or vacancy, the area has an unattractive façade to passing residents or visitors that represents lost opportunities for job and revenue-producing uses.

Scale: The current land use pattern in this area consists mainly of older industrial uses (such as manufacturing and warehousing), commercial uses (such as automotive and furniture), and vacant property. The properties are in the flood plain. Rail lines, roadways, and the river make the site fragmented.

Design Schematic

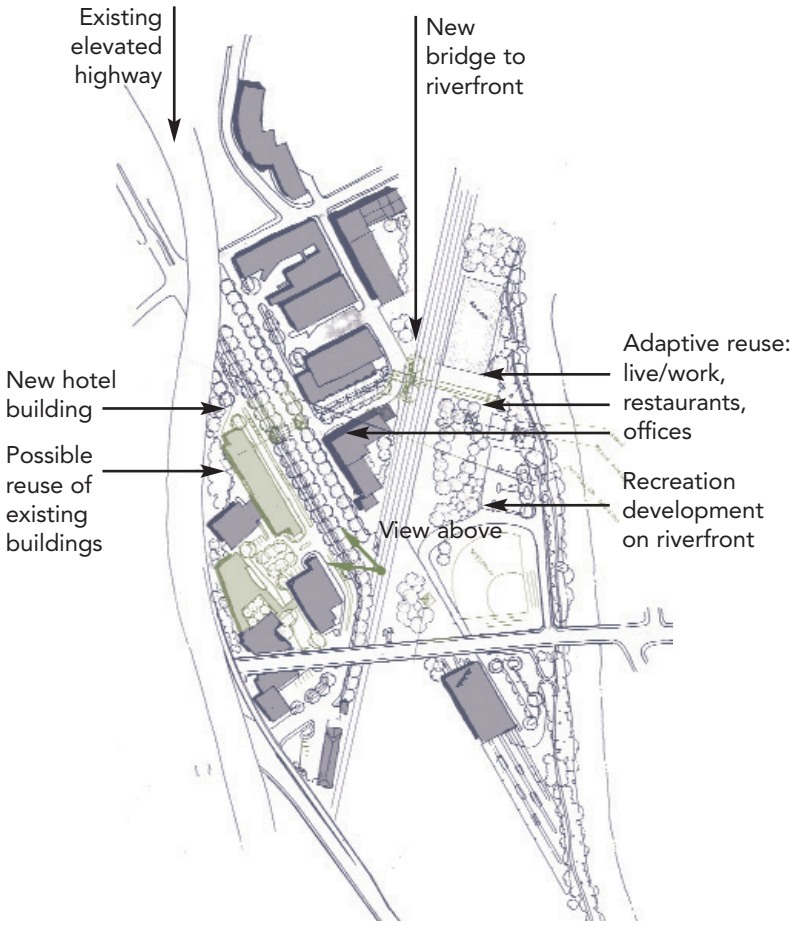
Land Uses: Land uses considered for this area should be developed for business support services such as hotel, grocery store, and restaurant. Shown is a new hotel built in conjunction with renovation of adjacent loft buildings. Area across the railroad track could be used for recreational purposes (i.e. park), with new or renovated buildings containing parking on ground floors in flood plain areas and loft residential uses and live-work space in upper floors.

Parking: Parking will be provided on site, screened from view by landscaping or located in interior courtyards.

Buildings: Second-level restaurants or clubs in this area could feature outdoor decks overlooking the river; such development would result in a mixed-use community with a 24-hour residential presence that would bring vitality to a key area near the downtown that is currently a partially-abandoned and underutilized area.

Streetscape: A walkway along the riverfront will connect to the downtown and the SJRA.

Before



After

DOWNTOWN HOUSING CLUSTER

Function: The site is a single square city block currently containing one or more underutilized structures. The current uses may include residential or office.

Scale: The area is adjacent to the downtown. A mix of two-, three-, and four-story multi-family and commercial buildings are adjacent to the site.

Downtown Housing Cluster – Infill
Land Uses: Existing buildings are purchased and removed in order to assemble a feasible development site. New four- to five-story structures are added. A mix of uses including residential (multi-family), office, and retail would be permitted.

Traffic: Access to site would be provided from side street to minimize impact.

Parking: Off-street parking could be added by underground garage, taking advantage of topography, or in courtyards.

Buildings: Buildings will be constructed with minimal setbacks, providing private courtyard space in the center of the development. The scale and density of the development may serve as a transition between downtown (taller buildings, high density) and adjacent neighborhood (detached houses, medium density).

Streetscape: Pedestrian access is encouraged by careful use of street trees and lighting. Crosswalks linking the development with the downtown will encourage pedestrian activity.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS

In recent years, Roanoke has aggressively promoted the development of neighborhood plans to guide the future of neighborhoods and link their development with the City's comprehensive plan. Detailed neighborhood plans are developed using an intensive citizen participation process. Plans are strategic and emphasize public-private partnerships to implement key recommendations. Neighborhood plans are used by the City and by neighborhood groups to make decisions on resolving issues, implementing specific projects, and guiding future development and public investment.

CHAPTER

FIVE

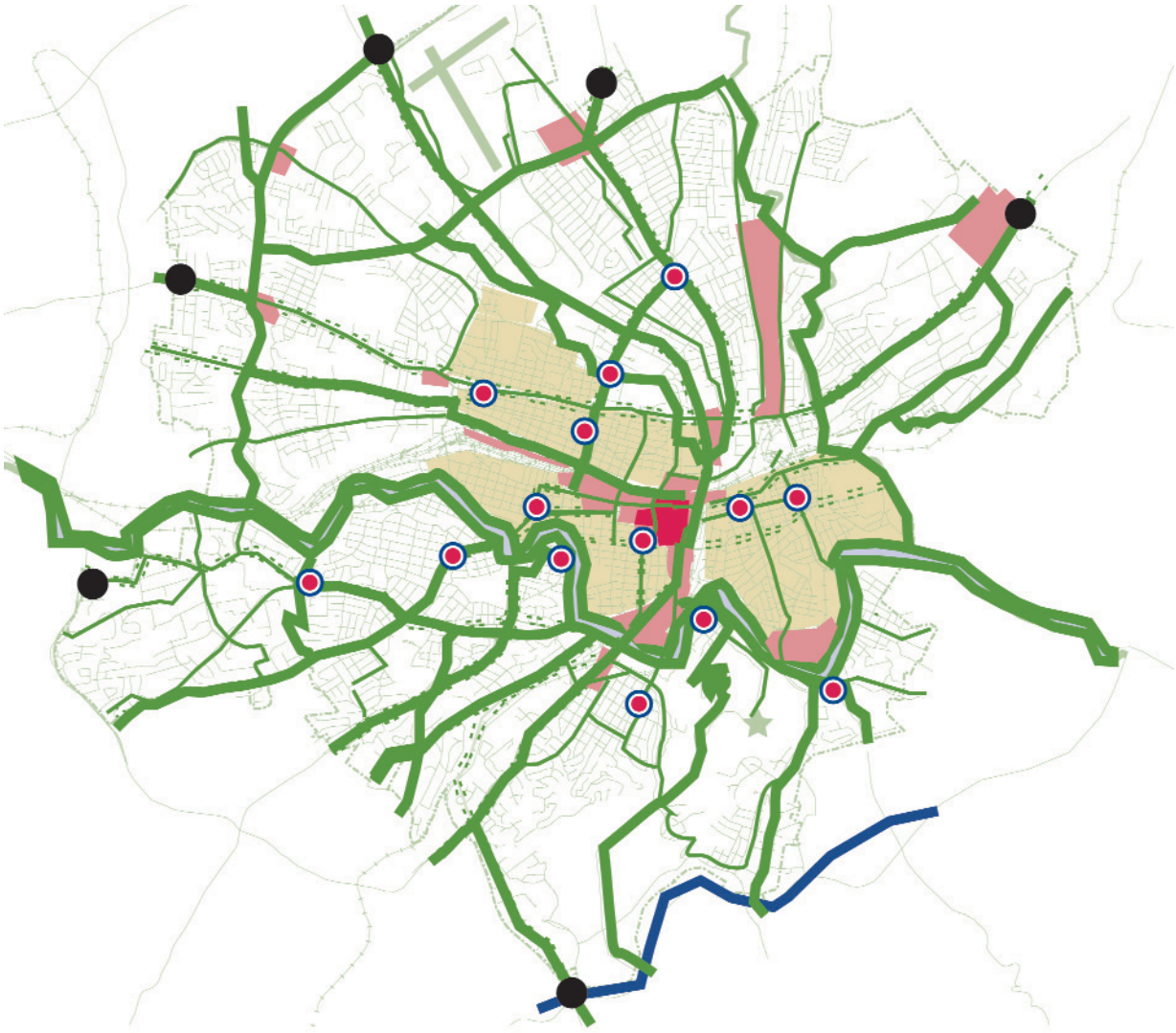
THE STRATEGIC PLAN:

MAPPING ELEMENTS AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

vision 2001 2020

THE STRATEGIC PLAN: MAPPING ELEMENTS AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The Vision 2001-2020 Plan is an integrated set of policies, actions, and strategies for successfully positioning Roanoke as a progressive, model city for urban development life in the future. The following Strategic Development Plan provides a summary of the major actions and initiatives identified in the plan, some of which will involve regional implementation approaches.



5.1 Strategic Development Plan

- Gateways
- Greenways-Pedestrian/Bicycle
- Bicycle Connection on Roadway
- Major Corridors for Streetscape Improvement
- Blue Ridge Parkway View Protection
- Village Centers
- Downtown Development
- Economic Development Opportunities
- Conservation/Rehabilitation District Opportunities

CHAPTER

SIX

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN: PRIORITY ACTIONS AND LONG-TERM POLICIES

vision 2001 2020

6.1 REGIONAL COOPERATION AND SOLUTIONS

The concept of regionalism is paramount to the future success of the Valley and to southwestern Virginia. Over the years, Roanoke and the surrounding jurisdictions have worked together in partnership to address common issues, promote the region, and creatively solve problems. There is much work yet to be done, and leadership is needed to promote additional partnerships, agreements, and cooperative networks. Regional approaches are critical for protecting the environment, attracting new economy businesses, providing quality public services, promoting cultural attractions, and enhancing educational systems. Regional summits and joint meetings of governmental leaders and bodies should be continued to proactively work toward addressing common public goals. These meetings and continued networking could result in an agreed-upon regional plan to benefit all jurisdictions. Such partnerships also could be effective in securing additional funding for public projects, attracting new businesses, and influencing state legislation and appropriations.

Regional Opportunities

As the urban center of the Roanoke Valley and the metropolitan area, the City can take advantage of many regional opportunities that cut across jurisdictional boundaries.

The natural environment of Roanoke and the surrounding region is a true asset for both residents and businesses. Protection of such assets as air, rivers and lakes, mountains, trees, open space, and important views is critical to maintaining and enhancing our quality of life.

Economic development and business recruitment in the region provide opportunities for residents of many jurisdictions. Quality development, employers, and good paying jobs provide a desirable and sustainable lifestyle for residents of the region. The economy of the region provides a foundation for all of its jurisdictions.

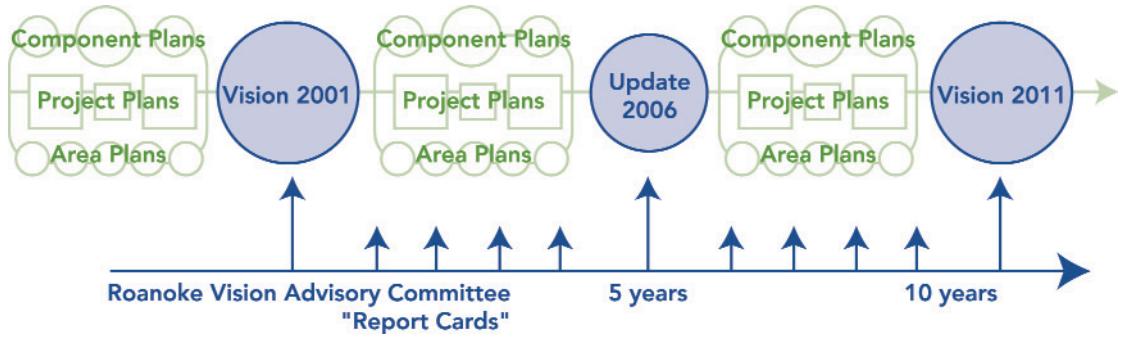
Public services such as water and sewer, transportation, recreation, solid waste management, and public safety offer additional regional opportunities to better serve citizens effectively and efficiently.

Educational systems such as local schools, colleges, universities, vocational training facilities, and libraries are essential in fostering lifelong learning for citizens and are fundamental to maintaining a vibrant economy and good employment opportunities.

Tourism and cultural activities available in Roanoke and the surrounding region are key elements in providing entertainment, encouraging a high quality of life, and attracting visitors and potential new residents to our community.

6.2 THE PLAN AS AN ONGOING PROCESS

The Vision 2001-2020 Plan is actually part of an ongoing planning and development process that is updated and refined over time through detailed policies, programs, and projects. The following diagram summarizes the process for continuing the planning program and evaluating its success.



Planning Procedures: Plan Updates and Refinements

Vision 2001-2020 does not end with the approval of the report by the Planning Commission and City Council. As shown in the chart, the plan is a continuing process.

Continuing Planning and Implementation

Detailed component plans will be created for various priority items such as Housing, Transportation, and Economic Development.

Specific neighborhood and area plans will be prepared (approximately six plans per year), as well as more detailed planning for village centers, corridors, or other special action areas.

Ongoing Reviews and Updates

The Planning Commission, City Council, and the City Manager charged the Vision 2001-2020 Advisory Committee with the responsibility of building into the plan features that would ensure implementation and accountability. The plan must contain more than dreams; it must be an action plan that holds local government, agencies, neighborhoods, businesses, and schools accountable for implementation. As part of the implementation strategy, the plan recommends the development of measurable indicators of community health and sustainability. Building on the regional indicators used in the New Century Council annual report, *Vital Signs: Community Indicators for the New Century Region*, Roanoke should adopt this format, recognizing the interdependence of the City's economic health and vitality with that of the region. As with *Vital Signs*, the data collection and reporting for the Vision 2001-2020 report card should be done on a local basis, with comparisons to the region and state.

Annually – The plan will be reviewed and a report prepared to provide a status update on actions taken and implementation.

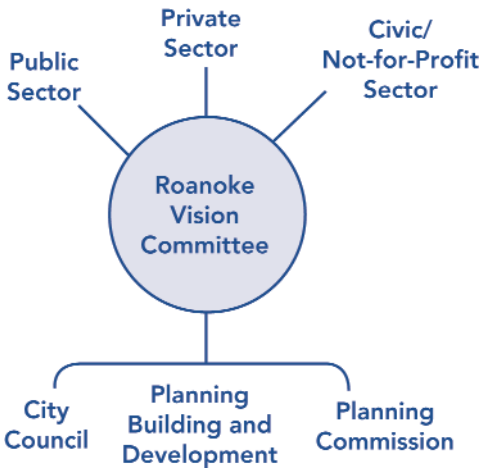
Five Years – The plan will be updated, examining regional and local demographic indicators,

revisiting elements and strategic initiatives with task teams and round tables, and revising actions and strategies as necessary – a mid-course correction of tasks, roles and responsibilities, and schedule.

Ten Years – The plan will undergo a major revision using U.S. Census data to develop a new Vision Plan (2011). Analyze new background data and include public participation for a new plan and policies.

Citizens' Advisory Committee

The participation of a citizens' advisory committee is key to the plan's implementation and success. This committee will assist the City in responding to various needs and organizations active in community-development matters. The following chart describes how a committee framework could be established to focus on community improvement and revitalization.



- Citizens should be representative of a variety of interests and professions. For example, committee members should include persons in real estate, law, banking, and health care, as well as individuals active in civic and special-interest organizations (history, environment, arts, etc.).
- The Committee should be organized with an elected chair, subcommittees, and established responsibilities.
- Committee members could serve as community partners to advise City officials and staff on applicable issues, both locally and regionally. Members also would act as the plan's advocate in the community.
- The Committee should meet regularly and assist with the annual report and offer any updates.

6.3 CITY ORGANIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

City Organization

Like many organizations today, the City's administrative structure is being updated to be more effective, efficient, responsive, and customer-oriented. City departments have been restructured and realigned to better provide public service and streamline operations. Strategic business planning is being done, and plans are being implemented and used in operational and capital budgeting. In addition, advanced technology and new administrators offer creative ideas and methods for doing business. Continued citizen participation and collaboration will be important in refining public services and developing effective programs.

Regulatory Techniques

Some of the most effective tools used to implement comprehensive plans are a locality's zoning and subdivision ordinances. These regulatory tools provide development standards for

land uses that are based upon the policies established in the adopted comprehensive plan. To implement Vision 2001-2020, it is recommended that the existing zoning and subdivision ordinances be revised to reflect the various recommendations of the plan, particularly with regard to new economy land uses, planned developments, environmental protection, and development standards. A zoning map should be developed that reflects the revised zoning ordinance and the recommendations in the plan. Additional consideration should be given to the use of overlay districts for funding special public improvements or for ensuring quality design in special areas. Regional authorities with regulatory management of certain public services also could be explored to address such issues as storm water, water and sewer systems, and solid waste.

Incentives

Ideally, incentives should be developed and used to help implement many of the plan's recommendations. Various incentives that could be considered include tax credits for property rehabilitation, business enterprise programs, financial assistance for special action areas, expanded education and training programs, investment in model projects, and transfer of development rights for environmental protection.

Voluntary participation in pilot programs or projects also should be encouraged by proactively soliciting stakeholders and involving a team of public and private interests and experts in championing a special project. Neighborhood organizations should consider seeking corporate sponsorship for support of their projects.

Financial Planning: The Key

All recommended public improvements and programs cannot be implemented at once; they must be carefully planned and financially integrated into the City's operating and capital improvement budgets. Consequently, the development and adoption of appropriate plans for public facilities (schools, utilities, public safety, etc.), business areas, and neighborhoods are important tools in identifying future needs so that financial resources may be appropriately phased and budgeted. The Vision 2001-2020 Plan should serve as a guiding reference for community development in the future. City operating departments should use the plan and other adopted community plans in conjunction with their strategic business plans to ensure that their operations address needed public services.

Public/Private/Civic Partnerships

The development of partnerships is essential to the successful implementation of the plan. Neither government nor the private sector is capable of handling the recommended strategies on its own. To be effective, teamwork and collaborative development are necessary.

For example, a "village center" could be implemented by establishing a "Business Development Center" as a technical assistance resource for local businesses and a series of local business improvement districts citywide. These improvement districts would have limited capacities for local property owners to undertake capital improvement or operational programs. However, by promoting partnerships of businesses and areas, a larger non-contiguous Business Improvement District could be established to serve all the village center areas. Day-to-day operations could be provided by the Business Development Center, and shared "circuit rider" staff could provide technical services related to promotion, leasing, and planning.

6.4 IMPLEMENTATION: STRATEGIES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND SCHEDULES

The following section consolidates the actions recommended in the plan elements (Chapter 3) into a matrix. The matrix is further broken down by a list of participants (City, Business, and Neighborhood/Nonprofit) and a timeframe (0-5, 6-10, more than 10 years) to guide implementation of the actions. It is important to note that the actions listed are dependent on partnership efforts in order to be successful. The timeframes recommended represent when some activity should be visible, not necessarily when the activities are to be completed. A more detailed matrix should be developed after adopting the plan, outlining a project schedule and identifying strategic partners needed to implement the plan.

ACTIONS	Participants			Timeframe		
	City	Business	Neighborhood/ Nonprofit	0 – 5 years	6 – 10 years	More than 10 years
HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS						
Village Centers						
NH A1. Revise zoning ordinance to encourage the development of higher-density, mixed-use village centers and strengthen site development, landscaping, and signage requirements in village centers.	●			♦		
NH A2. Identify and map existing and potential village center locations.	●			♦		
NH A3. Rezone existing and potential village center locations to encourage and accommodate higher-density development and a mixture of uses.	●			♦		
NH A4. Develop a strategy for improving existing village centers, redeveloping underutilized centers, and creating new centers in key locations through the neighborhood planning process.	●	●	●	♦		
NH A5. Consider ND, Neighborhood Design District, overlay zoning for qualifying centers in Rehabilitation and Conservation Areas to encourage compatible design of development in village centers.	●			♦		
NH A6. Develop interdepartmental and agency approaches to target public improvements in village centers.	●			♦		
NH A7. Locate City services in village centers, where feasible.	●				♦	
Neighborhood and Area Plans						
NH A8. Develop and adopt four to six neighborhood or area plans annually.	●			♦		
NH A9. Address the following in neighborhood plans: land use, transportation, public facilities and services, greenways, utilities, and economic development.	●			♦		

ACTIONS	Participants			Timeframe		
	City	Business	Neighborhood/ Nonprofit	0 – 5 years	6 – 10 years	More than 10 years
NH A10. Develop indicators for neighborhood health and sustainability.	●	●	●	♦		
NH A11. Involve neighborhood organizations, civic groups, and businesses in the development and implementation of neighborhood plans.	●	●	●	♦		
Marketing Programs						
NH A12. Inventory and increase marketing of existing housing programs and incentives that encourage new residential development.	●	●		♦		
NH A13. Develop housing marketing strategy to identify new programs and incentives.	●	●		♦		
Neighborhood Appearance						
NH A14. Increase infrastructure funding to improve and enhance existing neighborhood streets and streetscapes; explore alternative funding sources such as grants and private contributions.	●			♦		
NH A15. Strengthen neighborhood organizations and civic groups to develop neighborhood pride.	●			♦		
NH A16. Adopt design and performance standards for neighborhood streets, sidewalks, and tree canopies.	●		●	♦		
NH A17. Identify gateways, key intersections, and major corridors for physical improvement that promotes neighborhood identity and pride.	●	●	●	♦		
Downtown Neighborhood						
NH A18. Revise zoning ordinance and review the application of the building code to permit development of live/work space.	●			♦		
NH A19. Develop economic incentives to encourage residential development in the downtown.	●	●		♦		

ACTIONS	Participants			Timeframe		
	City	Business	Neighborhood/ Nonprofit	0 – 5 years	6 – 10 years	More than 10 years
NH A20. Inventory and market vacant lots and underutilized sites for higher-density, mixed-use development.	●		●	♦		
Housing Strategy						
NH A21. Complete a housing survey that maps sustainability indicators on a citywide basis.	●		●		♦	
NH A22. Develop a housing plan as a component of the comprehensive plan. The housing plan should include guidelines for housing choice, sustainability, and social and economic diversity.	●	●	●	♦		
NH A23. Develop criteria for evaluating new residential development proposals to ensure compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods and support of the City's goals of a balanced, sustainable housing supply.	●			♦		
NH A24. Strengthen enforcement of building maintenance codes, revise Rental Inspection Program to include periodic inspections as permitted by law, and develop a strategy to increase geographic coverage of Rental Inspection Program.	●	●		♦		
NH A25. Aggressively market the Real Estate Tax Abatement program to encourage rehabilitation of older homes.	●	●		♦		
NH A26. Consider demolition of derelict or neglected structures, outside of historic districts, when: • Rehabilitation is not economically feasible. • Plans for appropriate redevelopment are approved. • Redevelopment furthers the neighborhood goals for a balanced, sustainable housing supply.	●			♦		
NH A27. Identify and assemble vacant or underutilized land for the development of housing clusters. Consider using public or community development corporations to assemble property for housing development.	●		●		♦	

ACTIONS	Participants			Timeframe		
	City	Business	Neighborhood/ Nonprofit	0 – 5 years	6 – 10 years	More than 10 years
NH A28. Revise zoning ordinance to permit higher-density residential and mixed-use development for housing clusters. Where appropriate, rezone identified areas for development of housing clusters.	●			♦		
NH A29. Revise zoning ordinance to encourage quality infill development that reflects the character of the neighborhood including infill development standards.	●			♦		
Affordable Housing						
NH A30. Develop a plan for the location of shelters, transitional living facilities, and day facilities that provides appropriate services in all areas of the City and the region, taking into account access to public transportation and proximity to other support services.	●		●		♦	
NH A31. Develop affordable housing programs that include a mix of housing types and opportunities for both rental and homeownership.	●		●	♦		
ENVIRONMENTAL, CULTURAL, AND HISTORIC RESOURCES						
Parks and Recreation						
EC A1. Establish funding mechanisms to implement the parks plan (Phase II & III) and greenways plan in a timely manner.	●	●	●	♦		
EC A2. Encourage regional cooperation to develop and manage parks and recreation facilities that serve multiple jurisdictions (e.g., large recreation centers and aquatic centers). Conduct an assessment of the parks and the recreational needs of the region and consider the formation of a Regional Park Authority.	●	●	●	♦		
EC A3. Consider establishing appropriate user fees for recreation facilities.	●			♦		

ACTIONS	Participants			Timeframe		
	City	Business	Neighborhood/ Nonprofit	0 – 5 years	6 – 10 years	More than 10 years
Greenways						
EC A4. Develop strategies that encourage development of the Roanoke River Greenway for the entire length of the Roanoke River within the City limits. Consider developing an "adopt a greenway" program that encourages private and nonprofit sector involvement in the funding of greenways.	●			♦		
EC A5. Establish weekend bus service between downtown and natural resource destinations such as Explore Park, Carvins Cove, and the Appalachian Trail.	●			♦		
EC A6. Increase funding to accelerate construction of the greenway network.	●			♦		
EC A7. Promote trails on City-owned land, where feasible and suitable.	●		●	♦		
EC A8. Promote and increase access to trails and natural areas by providing parking, guide maps, and appropriate marking.	●			♦		
Views and Viewsheds						
EC A9. Develop a viewshed protection ordinance and seek regional approaches.	●				♦	
EC A10. Encourage reduced light pollution from development, particularly in residential neighborhoods, by improving development or ordinances.	●	●	●	♦		
EC A11. Adopt zoning regulations that address communication towers and minimize their visual impact.	●			♦		
EC A12. Protect Blue Ridge Parkway corridors adjacent to City limits through coordination with adjacent localities and careful planning.	●			♦		

ACTIONS	Participants			Timeframe		
	City	Business	Neighborhood/ Nonprofit	0 – 5 years	6 – 10 years	More than 10 years
Water Quality						
EC A13. Limit the amount of impervious surfaces to reduce runoff.	●	●	●	♦		
EC A14. Plant natural vegetation, preferably indigenous plant species, on land adjacent to the Roanoke River.	●		●		♦	
EC A15. Ensure integrity of the storm and waste water systems.	●	●	●	♦		
EC A16. Protect and stabilize creek banks by controlling storm water flow and preventing discharge through vegetative buffers, bioengineering, and other related methods.	●			♦		
EC A17. Protect the shorelines of the Roanoke River to enhance their scenic quality and protect water quality through a river conservation overlay and other appropriate tools.	●	●	●	♦		
Air Quality						
EC A18. Promote programs that raise awareness and reduce air pollution through testing, education, incentives, transit, and other related policies.	●			♦		
EC A19. Consider use of clean-burning fuels to enhance air quality.	●			♦		
EC A20. Establish tree canopy goals that include standards for preservation and planting of trees based on zoning district and density.	●			♦		
Environmental, Historic, and Cultural Resources						
EC A21. Develop a comprehensive regional marketing strategy that promotes Roanoke as an outdoors destination (Blue Ridge Parkway, Carvins Cove, mountains, trails, on-road bike routes, Virginia Birding Trail, Mill Mountain).	●	●	●	♦		

ACTIONS	Participants			Timeframe		
	City	Business	Neighborhood/ Nonprofit	0 – 5 years	6 – 10 years	More than 10 years
EC A22. Expand walking and driving tours of historic and cultural resources.		●	●	♦		
EC A23. Develop a stable source of funding from regional resources for greenways, marketing, cultural, historic, and recreation amenities such as a Blue Ridge Asset District.	●	●	●	♦		
EC A24. Develop local funding strategy for environmental programs, conservation easements, and cultural programs. • Earmark lodging and cigarette-tax increases for tourism and critical amenities. • Establish general fund matching grant program to leverage additional partnership funding. • Consider voluntary contributions to critical amenities on utility bills.	●	●	●	♦		
EC A25. Develop entertainment venues for concerts on Mill Mountain and other open areas.	●			♦		
EC A26. Undertake a comprehensive inventory of historic and cultural properties and districts in the City and consider historic districts, where applicable. Solicit neighborhood and stakeholder input in the inventory, where applicable.	●			♦		
EC A27. Promote local, state, and federal incentives to encourage rehabilitation of historic structures.	●		●	♦		
Public and Open Spaces						
EC A28. Revise zoning regulations to better address the placement of billboards in Roanoke and regulate maintenance of existing ones.	●			♦		
EC A29. Work with conservation organizations to identify critical open space or sensitive environmental properties and pursue the purchase of conservation easements.	●		●		♦	

ACTIONS	Participants: City	Participants: Business	Participants: Neighborhood/ Nonprofit	Timeframe: 0 – 5 years	Timeframe: 6 – 10 years	Timeframe: More than 10 years
EC A30. Encourage preservation of open space and farm land through appropriate land use programs.	●		●		♦	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT						
Economic Base						
ED A1. Develop and implement an economic development strategy that attracts, retains, and expands businesses in the targeted industries such as biotechnology, optics, information technology/software, and transportation-related manufacturing and services.	●			♦		
Regional Economic Development						
ED A2. Expand participation in regional economic development efforts. Continue meetings with elected officials and administrative staff with neighboring localities to discuss regional efforts.	●			♦		
Downtown						
ED A3. Adopt the downtown plan, *Outlook Roanoke Update*, as a component of Vision 2001-2020.	●		●	♦		
ED A4. Support initiatives to develop a technology zone in the downtown that permits mixed-use developments containing offices, residential, and commercial/retail support services.	●	●			♦	
ED A5. Develop an entertainment strategy for the downtown market area.	●		●		♦	
ED A6. Pursue strategies to increase availability of specialized retail and live/work space in the downtown.	●		●	♦		
ED A7. Complete survey of historic structures in the downtown.	●			♦		
ED A8. Facilitate the development of significant regional attractions such as the Imax Theater.	●	●	●		♦	

ACTIONS	Participants			Timeframe		
	City	Business	Neighborhood/ Nonprofit	0 – 5 years	6 – 10 years	More than 10 years
ED A9. Revise zoning ordinance to discourage demolition of downtown buildings being replaced by surface parking lots.	●	●	●		♦	
Tourism						
ED A10. Develop a "brand identity" for Roanoke. Coordinate with regional partners to launch a marketing campaign.	●	●	●	♦		
ED A11. Identify and develop a consistent funding source for tourism, marketing, and special events. Increase the current level of funding for the promotion of regional tourism through the Convention and Visitor's Bureau.	●				♦	
ED A12. Develop and install directional signs that are clear, consistent, and strategically placed to identify major attractions that capture tourists.	●		●	♦		
ED A13. Provide transportation connections (i.e., shuttle service) to multiple sites such as Explore Park, Carvins Cove, and Mill Mountain.			●	♦		
ED A14. Promote greenways and linkages to the downtown and surrounding areas.	●		●	♦		
ED A15. Increase efforts to provide information to tourists and residents. • Develop a primary source of consistent, up-to-date information that promotes and advertises festivals, events, and tourist attractions. • Develop and maintain a web site and list serve displaying public information. • Expand efforts to market attractions and programs at the airport and other key locations. • Create satellite centers for visitors at area shopping centers to capture local, regional, and destination shoppers. • Develop a regional outdoors guide.	●		●		♦	

ACTIONS	Participants			Timeframe		
	City	Business	Neighborhood/ Nonprofit	0 – 5 years	6 – 10 years	More than 10 years
ED A16. Expand the current marketing strategy to target young families and young adults. Strengthen and expand the Newcomer's Club; create a junior newcomer's club that involves children and teenagers.		●	●	♦		
ED A17. Develop a youth hostel or other budget hotel accommodation in the downtown to encourage hikers and Appalachian Trail enthusiasts to visit Roanoke.	●		●		♦	
Industrial Development						
ED A18. Identify underutilized industrial sites and promote redevelopment as part of Roanoke's economic development strategy.	●			♦		
ED A19. Support the redevelopment of the South Jefferson Redevelopment Area (SJRA) by coordinating with participating organizations such as Carilion, Virginia Tech, and the University of Virginia.	●	●	●	♦		
ED A20. Investigate a strategy for funding streetscape improvements in the Franklin Road gateway corridor (between SJRA and Wonju Street) to stimulate private sector development.	●			♦		
ED A21. Revise zoning regulations to encourage increased use of planned unit developments.	●			♦		
ED A22. Promote and market the Enterprise Zone program to existing and prospective businesses.	●			♦		
ED A23. Increase the role of the Industrial Development Authority and other redevelopment tools for areas such as West End, Plantation Road, and the Shenandoah Avenue corridor.	●				♦	

ACTIONS	Participants: City	Participants: Business	Participants: Neighborhood/ Nonprofit	Timeframe: 0 – 5 years	Timeframe: 6 – 10 years	Timeframe: More than 10 years
Technology Zones						
ED A24. Develop an economic development strategy to attract, retain, and grow technology businesses. Designate a lead agency to coordinate programs, resources, and planning for development of technology business. Create a web site that promotes Roanoke to technology companies. The site should contain information about available space, communication infrastructure, and links to other technology resources.	●	●	●	♦		
ED A25. Establish technology zones that provide special tax incentives, expedited development, and economic development assistance. Designate a section of downtown as the primary technology zone and key village centers as secondary technology zones.	●	●	●	♦		
Commercial Development						
ED A26. Identify underutilized commercial sites and promote revitalization.	●		●	♦		
ED A27. Revise zoning and develop guidelines that encourage maximum use of commercial and industrial sites by addressing setbacks, lot coverage, parking requirements, and landscaping to encourage development of commercial businesses in centers versus strip developments.	●			♦		
New Economic Initiatives						
ED A28. Initiate small-area plans for mixed use (i.e., residential, commercial, and light industrial) development in the West End, Plantation Road, and Shenandoah Avenue corridors.	●	●			♦	
ED A29. Initiate small-area plans considering rezoning of Crossroads area to consider a mix of high density residential, commercial, research & development, and underutilized commercial centers.	●	●			♦	

ACTIONS	Participants			Timeframe		
	City	Business	Neighborhood/ Nonprofit	0 – 5 years	6 – 10 years	More than 10 years
ED A30. Develop incentives and programs to encourage redevelopment activities that create attractive commercial corridors in areas of strip development and underutilized commercial centers.	●	●		♦		
ED A31. Revise zoning ordinance to permit small-acreage, mixed-use (flex-space) development.	●			♦		
ED A32. Revise zoning ordinance to permit home offices in certain residential areas.	●			♦		
ED A33. Explore redevelopment of areas identified for industrial, commercial, or mixed-use development or reuse such as: • South Jefferson Redevelopment Area (SJRA) • Franklin Road between SJRA and Wonju Street • Crossroads Mall area • Campbell Avenue between 5th and 10th Streets • Roanoke Salem Plaza • Shenandoah Avenue • Plantation and Hollins Road area Area plans for these sites should include participation of stakeholders and design professionals.	●	●	●	♦		
Work Force						
ED A34. Invest in education and training to create a labor force that can succeed in an information-based economy.	●		●		♦	
ED A35. Support and expand workforce development efforts that link economic development agencies and educational institutions. Develop work/study (co-operative) programs linking industry, high schools, colleges, and economic development agencies.	●	●	●		♦	
Village Centers						
ED A36. Encourage village centers through identification of potential locations in neighborhood plans.	●		●		♦	

ACTIONS	Participants: City	Participants: Business	Participants: Neighborhood/ Nonprofit	Timeframe: 0 – 5 years	Timeframe: 6 – 10 years	Timeframe: More than 10 years
ED A37. Develop design guidelines for village centers.	●			♦		
ED A38. Revise zoning ordinance to permit mixed-use residential/commercial development and live/work space in village centers and on the periphery of the central commercial areas.	●			♦		
INFRASTRUCTURE						
Road System						
IN A1. Adopt standard design principles for streets and develop a manual to guide construction that affects the streetscape and includes attractive designs for traffic calming devices.	●			♦		
IN A2. Develop an inventory of City streets based on transportation corridor classifications and identify priorities for design improvements.	●			♦		
IN A3. Develop a transportation plan as a component of Vision 2001-2020 that uses the recommended design principles to implement and prioritize street improvements. Identify priorities for streetscape improvements through neighborhood plans and through a street design inventory.	●				♦	
IN A4. Expand the urban forestry program to increase the number of street trees planted and replaced.	●		●	♦		
IN A5. Change zoning, subdivision, and other development ordinances to include revised street design principles.	●			♦		
IN A6. Coordinate with state and regional transportation agencies to include revised design standards for new and existing public roadways. Pursue public transportation links between the New River Valley and Roanoke.	●			♦		

ACTIONS	Participants			Timeframe		
	City	Business	Neighborhood/ Nonprofit	0 – 5 years	6 – 10 years	More than 10 years
Pedestrian, Greenway, and Bicycle Systems						
IN A7. Develop a greenway system to provide pedestrian and bicycle linkages between the region's parks, rivers, creeks, natural areas, recreation areas, business centers, schools, and other institutions.	●	●	●	♦		
IN A8. Identify long-term funding for sidewalk construction.	●				♦	
IN A9. Develop procedures that link or expand greenways when obtaining rights-of-way when developing utilities.	●				♦	
IN A10. Develop and adopt a bicycle and pedestrian transportation plan that uses the recommended design principles.	●	●	●		♦	
Transit System						
IN A11. Develop programs to increase ridership of Valley Metro.	●	●		♦		
IN A12. Encourage employers to establish motor pools for work-related trips during the day so employees can walk or bike to work.	●	●	●		♦	
IN A13. Continue programs that provide public transportation to disabled citizens; consider expansion of service to employment and medical centers.	●		●	♦	♦	♦
IN A14. Explore streetcars or other mass transit systems.	●			♦		
Airport						
IN A15. Encourage expanded direct air service to major national destinations.	●	●			♦	
IN A16. Provide accessible shuttle service between the airport and other local destinations.	●				♦	
Rail System						
IN A17. Encourage expansion of rail service to relieve truck congestion on Interstate 81.	●	●			♦	

ACTIONS	Participants: City	Participants: Business	Participants: Neighborhood/ Nonprofit	Timeframe: 0 – 5 years	Timeframe: 6 – 10 years	Timeframe: More than 10 years
IN A18. Explore development of a regional facility for truck-to-rail intermodal transfer facility and inland port.	●	●				♦
IN A19. Pursue passenger rail service.	●	●				♦
Technology Infrastructure						
IN A20. Create a task force responsible for developing a technology strategy.	●	●		♦		
IN A21. Inventory and map technology resources such as available buildings, communications infrastructure, and existing technology businesses.	●	●		♦		
IN A22. Foster strong partnerships and cooperative projects with Virginia Tech and other local universities.	●		●		♦	
Water and Wastewater						
IN A23. Promote regional solutions to storm water and public water and sewer needs and services, including consideration of water conservation strategies.	●				♦	
IN A24. Maintain and upgrade sanitary sewer lines to eliminate infiltration and inflow of storm water.	●				♦	
PUBLIC SERVICES						
Public Safety						
PS A1. Develop strategies that strengthen community policing (i.e., COPE) efforts between the police department, residents, businesses, and community groups.	●	●	●	♦		
PS A2. Public safety agencies will maintain or exceed nationally recognized standards.	●			♦		
PS A3. Revise zoning ordinance to integrate crime prevention through environmental design in the development review process.	●			♦		

ACTIONS	Participants			Timeframe		
	City	Business	Neighborhood/ Nonprofit	0 – 5 years	6 – 10 years	More than 10 years
PS A4. Promote citizen participation in public safety programs such as the Citizens Police Academy.	●		●	♦		
PS A5. Study and promote regional approaches to providing public safety services that ensure their location and operation provide the most equitable, effective, and efficient service to citizens.	●			♦		
Code Administration, Boards, and Commissions						
PS A6. Revise zoning ordinance regarding nuisance offenses to provide for civil fines and on-site ticketing to increase compliance.	●			♦		
PS A7. Provide code enforcement information to residents and inspectors in satellite service facilities.	●				♦	
PS A8. Provide ongoing training for boards and commissions related to zoning, property maintenance, and development codes through certified training programs.	●			♦		
PS A9. Revise zoning and other ordinances to address new development patterns and land uses.	●			♦		
PS A10. Coordinate regulations, where feasible, with neighboring jurisdictions for consistency.	●			♦		
PS A11. Increase the use of information technology to improve services.	●			♦		
Solid Waste Management						
PS A12. Develop and expand recycling and educational programs that promote its use.	●	●	●	♦		
PS A13. Consider developing a staffed recycling center with a household hazardous waste component.	●			♦		

ACTIONS	Participants			Timeframe		
	City	Business	Neighborhood/ Nonprofit	0 – 5 years	6 – 10 years	More than 10 years
City Administration and Service Delivery						
PS A14. Pursue innovative service-delivery strategies that improve customer service. Increase the use of computers and information technology to reduce reliance on paper and provide greater access and sharing of information.	●			♦		
PS A15. Ensure that all schools and City-owned facilities are located, designed, and maintained to complement neighboring land uses.	●				♦	
PS A16. Pursue regional efforts for solid waste management and recycling.	●				♦	
PS A17. Consider development of community service facilities to provide direct services and serve as information and referral centers. • Identify community service needs for two pilot locations (north and south) for centers. • Develop an administrative plan that provides services and management of the centers. • Involve private and non-profit sector organizations such as the Council of Community Services in planning for the facilities.	●		●	♦		
PEOPLE **Education and Lifelong Learning**						
PE A1. Develop and expand strategies that encourage parents and children to make the commitment for children to attend and participate in school every day.	●	●	●	♦		
PE A2. Create programs that provide opportunities for education and coaching in local institutions such as churches, neighborhood groups, and businesses to increase awareness and value of education.		●	●		♦	
PE A3. Develop plans for constructive alternatives for students in in-school suspension.	●			♦		

ACTIONS	Participants			Timeframe		
	City	Business	Neighborhood/ Nonprofit	0 – 5 years	6 – 10 years	More than 10 years
PE A4. Create ways to encourage churches and civic groups to adopt a school and provide after-school programs/activities to build youth interest and provide role models for success.	●		●	♦		
Libraries						
PE A5. Improve the downtown main library to provide greater accessibility, better service delivery, and access to technology. Consider building improvements, a new building, or relocation of the library.	●			♦		
PE A6. Continue to support the Virginia Room as the premier resource center for genealogy and history.	●			♦	♦	♦
PE A7. Explore inclusion of business-development services at the main library.	●	●		♦		
PE A8. Develop a plan that identifies branch library facilities that have become outdated or cannot be expanded; consider relocation to sites that have improved technology facilities, access to bus service, and provide adequate and safe parking.	●				♦	
Health and Human Services						
PE A9. Promote programs that educate citizens regarding public and private programs to make health care more accessible.	●		●	♦		
PE A10. Develop a strategy that addresses duplication of inter-related services in health and human service programs.	●		●		♦	
PE A11. Promote health care programs related to pre-natal care, immunization, dental and vision care, and health screening by using the Internet, television, and other forms of media.	●		●	♦		
PE A12. Inventory existing day care facilities; develop a plan aimed at increasing the availability of affordable day and evening care for children, elderly, and the handicapped.	●		●	♦		

ACTIONS	Participants			Timeframe		
	City	Business	Neighborhood/ Nonprofit	0 – 5 years	6 – 10 years	More than 10 years
PE A13. Develop special needs programs that are accessible and connected to housing and support networks.	●		●		♦	
PE A14. Provide accessible information in satellite service facilities.	●				♦	
PE A15. Promote development of a regional cost-sharing program for health and human services.	●		●		♦	
PE A16. Establish new regional public transportation routes in the Valley to provide better access to health care and support services.	●				♦	
PE A17. Develop strategies that support greater use of recreational and exercise programs in schools, parks, and greenways.	●		●	♦		

ROANOKE–A VIBRANT AND WELL PLANNED CITY

Roanoke is a vibrant city with a long history of successful planning and development. John Nolen's vision of a regional city encouraged a framework of beautiful neighborhoods and civic buildings, tree-lined streets, neighborhood parks and schools, strong business districts, and promotion of the area's natural environment. Roanoke continues to build on these concepts and visions for the future to create a more sustainable community.

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